

St George's Foundation Primary School

Clarence Road, Portland, Dorset DT5 2BD

Inspection dates	12–13 April 2016
Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher has improved all aspects of the school since the previous inspection. Staff and governors strongly support the senior leadership in ensuring sustained improvement.
- School leaders at all levels check the quality of teaching and learning rigorously. They use assessment information well to make sure that pupils get the right level of support where necessary.
- Attainment has risen. Standards are above the national average by the time pupils leave school.
- All groups of pupils, including the most able, disadvantaged pupils and those pupils who have special educational needs or disability, achieve well.
- Progress is good in all subjects, including reading, writing and mathematics. The school has largely eliminated previous gaps in the rate of progress between different groups of pupils.
- Reception Year children benefit from good teaching and leadership and make good progress, so they are well prepared for Year 1.
- Teaching has improved considerably since the previous inspection. Teachers benefit from good opportunities for professional development.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is nearly always exemplary. Pupils enjoy school and have a very positive attitude towards learning. They greatly appreciate the wide range of opportunities the school provides both within lessons and during enrichment activities.
- The quality of care and support provided, particularly for those who are vulnerable, is outstanding. Pupils feel very safe in school.
- Governance has improved since the previous inspection. Governors know the school well and challenge the leadership constructively.
- Parents are very supportive of the school and, along with the staff, recognise the considerable improvements made since the previous inspection.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Although attendance has improved, it remains just below average.
- Although the most-able pupils now achieve well over time, in some learning activities there is insufficient challenge to enable them to reach their full potential.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the good teaching, so that more of it becomes outstanding and further boosts achievement by making sure that the most-able pupils are given enough challenging work in lessons.
- Improve attendance to strengthen the achievement and opportunities of the few pupils who do not attend school punctually or regularly.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher has shown exemplary determination, drive and rigour in improving all aspects of the school since the previous inspection. Staff unanimously support the drive for continued improvement and welcome being held to account for pupils' progress. Typical staff comments are, 'We are all proud to be part of this school', 'In the last two years the school has gone from strength to strength,' and 'The improvements made have raised the bar even higher'.
- School leaders know their school very well. They evaluate the school's performance accurately and plan very appropriately for the next steps in the journey towards excellence.
- The successes already achieved and the fact that pupils are on track to meet even more challenging targets show that the school has a strong capacity to improve further.
- School leaders now check the quality of teaching and learning more systematically and rigorously. Teaching has improved considerably since the previous inspection. Teachers have benefited from good opportunities for professional development, which has improved their teaching practice and accelerated pupils' learning. All teachers are expected to take on responsibility for a subject or some other aspect of the school's provision. Their leadership is effective in driving further improvement.
- Staff are rewarded only for their success in meeting demanding targets. They are very appreciative of the opportunities they receive for good professional development. Much of this comes from opportunities provided within the Chesil Education Partnership, which leaders greatly value.
- The school's leadership has improved the attainment and progress of all groups of pupils. Staff now use assessment information much more effectively to ensure that pupils get support where it is most needed, with the effective support of the deputy headteacher. Pupil premium funding is used to good effect, for example, by providing extra staff support and providing further opportunities for disadvantaged pupils to take part in a range of activities to improve their academic and personal skills. The range of specialist support provided for pupils with varying needs is now a strength of the school.
- The school has a curriculum that enables pupils to learn core skills such as English and mathematics well and also provides a wide range of enrichment possibilities which pupils enjoy. For example, there are many opportunities to learn music and many clubs for sport and other activities. Such activities enrich learning and further develop pupils' musical and physical skills.
- The school promotes spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very effectively. Visitors come into school to explain different faiths and cultures. Pupils learn about faiths such as Hinduism as well as Christianity. There is also a strong emphasis on promoting values such as tolerance and democracy, which helps pupils understand British values. Pupils have participated in writing the school prayer. An inspector observed an assembly in which pupils were encouraged to reflect on key concepts such as friendship and trust when considering personal relationships.
- School leaders use the additional sports funding to good effect. The school has bought into the local schools' sports partnership, employed specialist sports coaches and increased pupil participation in sports activities, which has improved their fitness and well-being. Staff receive training to improve their teaching skills in physical education.
- The local authority provided effective support to improve provision and outcomes following the previous inspection. It now has a less intensive monitoring role because it recognises the great strides made by the leadership in moving the school forward.
- The school strongly promotes equal opportunities. All pupils have the opportunity to succeed both academically and in their personal development. Previous gaps in pupils' attainment have closed quickly. Pupils feel very much part of an inclusive community in which individuals support each other and avoid any discriminatory behaviour.
- The school's successes in several aspects of its provision have led it to be used as a model within the local authority for areas such as planning for successful improvement. Staff from other schools come to St George's to observe good practice. The headteacher goes into other schools to support their improvement.

- The school works very hard and mostly successfully to engage with parents. Parents are invited into school to find out about their child's progress. They also come into school to celebrate successes in pupils' work and attend events such as assemblies and school productions. Although a small minority of parents feel that communications between the school and home could be better, the great majority are very appreciative of what the school does for their children. A typical parental comment during the inspection was, 'Teachers are engaged and passionate'.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governance is effective. It is much stronger than at the time of the previous inspection. Governors recognise their responsibilities to support the school leadership and appropriately hold staff to account for pupils' outcomes. They are now much more focused on improvement. For example, governors review subject action plans and assessment information to pinpoint what is working well and what must be improved.
 - Governors have a good understanding of how well pupils of all abilities do in comparison with pupils nationally. They also have a realistic view of the strengths and areas for development in teaching.
 - Governors oversee the process of the performance management of staff effectively. They receive regular training to update their knowledge and responsibilities in important aspects such as safeguarding. They keep school policies relevant and updated.
 - Governors challenge the leadership where appropriate, for example, when seeking clarification of the impact of initiatives such as pupil premium funding on pupils' performance. The governing body plays a key role in moving the school along its path to greater success.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The appropriate policies and procedures are in place to keep pupils safe and secure. Staff know what their safeguarding responsibilities are. Policies on aspects such as child protection and combating radicalisation and extremism are up to date and take account of recent government advice. The leadership takes issues such as safe use of the internet very seriously.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Teaching is much more effective at meeting the needs of pupils than it was at the time of the previous inspection. This is evident from leaders' records of the extensive monitoring of teaching and learning. It is also evident in the improvements in pupils' work and their test results.
- Staff now have a range of good opportunities to develop their expertise. Teachers observe good practice in their own and other schools, and support each other effectively to raise standards and to improve their teaching skills. Staff spoken to during the inspection welcomed the opportunities to develop their skills provided within the Chesil Education Partnership.
- The expertise of teaching assistants has also improved. Some have particular specialisms, which help to ensure that pupils with a range of particular learning needs receive good support both in school classrooms and in small groups or as individuals outside lessons. Inspectors witnessed this during the inspection.
- Teachers follow the school policy on marking closely, so that pupils know how to improve their work as well as celebrate what they already do well. Teachers mark pupils' work extensively and in a very constructive way, so that pupils are helped to reach their targets. This is very evident in their books.
- All teachers are now expected to analyse the achievement of all their pupils and take this into account when planning their work to meet the specific needs of individual pupils. Teachers use assessment information effectively to promote progress and to inform lesson planning. Assessment is one of the school's strengths.
- The teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds that they represent) has improved, as is evident in the progress made by pupils in reading and literacy generally. There is a good range of reading resources to promote wider reading.
- The teaching of mathematics and writing has improved considerably, and pupils work hard to meet their teachers' high expectations, for example, by showing pride in the presentation of their written work.
- The effective teaching of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs or disability has accelerated their progress considerably and closed the gaps in progress with that of other pupils.

- Teachers' high expectations of the most-able pupils are evident in pupils' work and their improved results by the time they leave school. However, occasionally in lessons the level of challenge usually seen in their work is not as evident. On these occasions, they do not achieve their full potential. The school's leadership recognises this as an area to address further in order to achieve excellence.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils say that they feel very safe in school, and parents confirm this. The school is outstandingly successful in providing high-quality care and support for the significant number of pupils who are vulnerable or have particular learning needs. The school's success in caring for these pupils is shown in the good progress in their work as well as their gains in confidence.
- Several pupils join the school other than at the usual times. Some of these pupils have learning difficulties, but the school has integrated them very successfully and they make good progress.
- Pupils enjoy taking on responsibility. The school council is very active. Staff encourage pupils to express their views on how the school should develop its facilities and decide which charities the school should support. The school supports a partner school in Kenya.
- The recently introduced breakfast club has been successful in giving several disadvantaged pupils a healthy and enjoyable start to the school day.
- There are well-developed programmes in place to ensure that pupils leaving one phase of education move smoothly to the next, for example at the age of 11.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils behave very well around the school, including at break- and lunchtimes.
- Behaviour in lessons is nearly always exemplary. Pupils enjoy learning. They collaborate very well when required to do so. They take great pride in their work, as seen for example in the high-quality presentation in their books.
- Pupils understand what forms bullying can take, but they are confident that bullying is not an issue in the school. School records confirm the good behaviour and absence of incidents, for example of racist or homophobic behaviour.
- The school works very hard with parents to improve attendance, particularly with those parents who do not send their child to school regularly. There has been some improvement in reducing the level of absence, particularly of disadvantaged pupils, but absence remains just below the national average.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Pupils' attainment and progress have improved considerably since the previous inspection. The success of the school in addressing underachievement was already evident in the national test results last year. For the first time in many years, the attainment of pupils by the time they left school was above the national average, for both boys and girls.
- Since then, pupils' achievement has continued to improve. Attainment in key stage 1 has improved so that it is above average in Year 2. Standards achieved in the Year 1 phonics screening check are close to or above the national expectation for most pupils.
- Attainment in key stage 2 has continued to rise, and increasing numbers of pupils attain above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. The school has built upon the positive progress shown last year as pupils move up through the school. The majority of pupils, boys and girls, achieve well in English and mathematics, given their original starting points.
- Disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs or disability, who used to make less progress than other pupils in the school and other pupils nationally, also make good progress. Particularly effective has been the school's success in lessening, or in many cases removing, the gaps in achievement between different groups of pupils in all year groups.

- Attainment and progress in reading have improved. Reading has a high profile in the school. Staff have worked hard to improve comprehension skills, as inspectors saw during the inspection. Many pupils read confidently and accurately for their age.
- Attainment and progress in mathematics have improved, and staff are now more confident in teaching new approaches to the subject.
- Attainment and progress in writing have improved for all groups of pupils, in both key stage 1 and key stage 2. Pupils write in a range of styles, and take pride in the presentation of their work. Some of the writing is quite ambitious and of a high standard, for example, when writing about various Shakespeare plays.
- The most-able pupils make good progress. Their writing is particularly impressive, whether pupils are doing factual or imaginative writing.
- There is good progress in other subjects, partly because the school has encouraged good-quality writing in subjects other than English. For example, there is a lot of investigative work in science. In history, older pupils do research and write interesting accounts of the results, for example, about events in Britain during the Second World War.
- The good progress made means that pupils are very well prepared for the transition to their next school at the end of Year 6.
- Although the most-able pupils make good progress by the time they leave school, occasionally they do not achieve their full potential in classroom activities. This happens when the work is not of the usual level of challenge that they enjoy.

Early years provision

is good

- Many children join Reception with levels of skills and knowledge below or well below what is typical for their age. As a result of good teaching and excellent care and support, they make good progress in all areas of learning. In several aspects, children reach a level of development above what is expected by the end of Reception, so that they are well prepared for the move into Year 1.
- Most of the disadvantaged children are making good progress and are on track to reach a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year.
- Where there are gaps in achievement, for example between boys and girls, the school has addressed this with increasing success. Previous weaknesses in the development of communication and number skills are also less evident.
- Teaching is good. Staff have high expectations, as seen during the inspection, for example, when children of all abilities successfully practised their early writing skills in response to the 'Jack and the Beanstalk' story.
- Children develop their personal and social skills well. They quickly learn the conventions of playing and learning together, so they cooperate well, learning for example to take turns. Many quickly develop their confidence. They listen well to staff.
- Several children talked confidently and at length to inspectors, keen to explain what they were doing in their work. One child was able to explain to his classmates how to look after a collection of minibeasts and gave articulate answers to some complex questions.
- The high level of care reinforces this confidence. The children feel very safe. They enjoy activities both inside the well-resourced classrooms and the well-equipped outdoor areas.
- There is good leadership of early years provision. The leader has an accurate understanding of children's needs and progress, based on good assessment. The leader has developed good links with the on-site pre-schools and other local pre-school settings. There are also good procedures to make sure that children move smoothly into Year 1.
- Staff encourage parents to support their children's learning at home and also to come into school for 'stay and play' sessions. Children's work done at home is celebrated on the school website.
- Occasionally, staff interactions with the most-able children in particular are not incisive enough for them to learn to their full potential in parts of lessons.

School details

Unique reference number	127133
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	10009226

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	423
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Crabb
Headteacher	Jo Luxon
Telephone number	01305 820520
Website	www.stgeorgesportland.co.uk
Email address	office@stgeorgesportland.dorset.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	8–9 January 2014

Information about this school

- The school is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium (additional government funding to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those that are looked after by the local authority) is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is above average.
- The school meets the current floor standards, which are the government's minimum expectations of attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- Children in Reception attend full time, in two classes.
- The school operates a breakfast club.
- The school belongs to the Chesil Education Partnership, which comprises several local schools.
- There are two pre-schools on the school site, which are run independently and did not form part of the inspection.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 17 lessons. They carried out several of the observations jointly with members of the senior leadership team. Inspectors also visited other lessons for shorter periods.
- Inspectors heard pupils read aloud and also extensively evaluated pupils' work in books.
- Inspectors met with members of staff and pupils. The lead inspector met with seven governors and with a representative from the local authority. He also met with a member of staff from the Chesil Education Partnership, of which the school is a member.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including the school improvement plan, the school's evaluation of its own performance, assessment information about pupils' current progress, minutes of governing body meetings and information relating to safeguarding.
- Inspectors analysed 47 responses to the online parent questionnaire, Parent View. They also looked at 59 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

John Laver, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Martin Greenwood	Ofsted Inspector
Wendy Hanrahan	Ofsted Inspector

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