

St George's New Town Junior School

Canterbury Road, Colchester, Essex CO2 7RU

Inspection dates

9–10 November 2017

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
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The high expectations and dedication of the headteacher are shared by staff and governors. This has led to rapid improvements in teaching, learning and assessment, pupils' behaviour and pupils' achievements since the previous inspection.
- Leaders and governors have an accurate view of what the school does well and what needs to improve. The school is well placed to improve further.
- Recent appointments to the governing body have secured a diverse team with a wide skill set that is effective in holding the school to account.
- The stimulating curriculum and wide range of enrichment activities provide high-quality learning opportunities for pupils to extend their sporting, musical and artistic skills.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Leaders prepare pupils well for life in modern Britain.
- Pupils' behaviour is good, both in lessons and around the school. Pupils treat each other and adults with respect and show positive attitudes towards their learning.
- Leaders have worked effectively to continue to improve the attendance rates, so that attendance is now above the national average for all pupil groups.
- Pupils are safe and well cared for. Leaders and governors make sure that there are effective safeguarding arrangements in place.
- Standards are improving. In 2016, Year 6 pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics was above that of their peers nationally. Provisional Year 6 pupils' outcomes for 2017 indicate that pupils do not make as much progress in reading and mathematics as they do in writing.
- Current in-school assessment information indicates that most pupil groups are making at least good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Writing progress is significantly above that made by pupils nationally.
- The majority of parents would recommend the school and are supportive of its work. However, there is a minority who feel that they are not well informed, in particular about the school's systems for managing pupils' behaviour.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good. Where teaching is strongest, pupils are well motivated. Typically, pupils make good progress, but the level of challenge for the most able is inconsistent. Teachers do not always use assessment information effectively to match learning to pupils' needs.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Address the remaining inconsistencies in teaching and learning, so that all pupil groups continue to make good progress and achieve well, by ensuring that teachers:
 - use assessment information effectively in lessons to match teaching and learning to pupils' needs
 - provide appropriate challenge for most-able pupils
 - share and learn from the good teaching practice across the school to improve all teaching, but especially to secure further improvements in mathematics.
- Improve the effectiveness of communications with parents, so that they fully understand the school's systems for securing improvements in pupils' behaviour.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher's high aspirations, combined with high expectations, have resulted in rapid improvements. He has identified key development issues through accurately analysing school assessment information. He has shared these with all school staff. Consequently, all members of staff know their roles and responsibilities and the part they play in further areas for improvement.
- Staff say that there have been 'a step forward' and 'a positive culture change' since the previous inspection and they feel empowered to secure further improvements. Consequently, the leadership team has good capacity to develop the school further.
- As a result of leaders' accurate analysis of all pupils' progress, any pupil at risk of underachieving is supported through planned actions that target the skills they need. These pupils catch up and make good progress.
- The achievement of pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, and those pupils who are disadvantaged, is rising swiftly. This is due to the incisive actions taken by school leaders. These groups of pupils are now making at least good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Highly personalised provision and close monitoring of pupils' progress ensure that teaching, including programmes of support, is well suited to pupils' needs. Consequently, these pupils make good progress from their starting points and achieve well.
- Overall, teaching, learning and assessment are good, enabling most pupil groups to make at least expected progress from their starting points. However, where teaching is weaker, the most able pupils are not challenged sufficiently. This is because assessment information is not always used as effectively as it should be to match learning to pupils' needs. The good practice that exists in the school is not shared systematically to support the improvement of weaker teaching, especially in mathematics.
- The curriculum is stimulating, as clearly demonstrated in the many high-quality displays around the school. Pupils have various opportunities to develop their sporting, musical and artistic skills. During the inspection, pupils were observed singing beautifully to parents in assemblies focused on Remembrance Day. A selection of pupils will be performing in the upcoming Essex school choir competition at Essex University. They will perform choral pieces in school as part of their Christmas celebrations.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils respect others' faiths and beliefs. For example, after studying key themes of Hinduism in religious education, upper key stage 2 pupils are looking forward to their planned visit to Neasden Temple in London. Pupil leadership roles, such as school prefects and school council representatives, enable pupils to take responsibility and recognise right from wrong. Assembly themes, such as British values, support pupils in learning about life in modern Britain.
- Leaders use pupil premium funding effectively to support disadvantaged pupils. They have an accurate view of disadvantaged pupils' barriers to learning and plan effectively

to remove these. For example, the school runs a breakfast club for vulnerable pupils, which, through its nurturing and caring approach, ensures that pupils are ready to learn at the start of the school day.

- The primary physical education and sport premium funding is spent well to promote sport and physical education within school and through extra-curricular activities. The sports leader has worked hard to offer a range of opportunities that appeal to different groups of pupils, irrespective of gender or ability. For example, yoga has recently been introduced as part of the school's physical education curriculum and inspectors observed a motivated group of pupils taking part in a yoga session.
- The local authority has guided and supported school leaders effectively through initiatives such as leadership mentors. This involved brokered support from a headteacher of a local outstanding school. The school has also benefited from the support of the local Tiptree and Stanway Consortium. As a result of the school improvement strategies shared by the consortium and selected by the school, St George's has made good progress.
- Pupils' behaviour and their personal development are well managed. Actions taken by leaders to improve attendance, particularly for pupils who are disadvantaged or who have SEN and/or disabilities, have been very effective. Consequently, attendance for all pupil groups is now above the national average and improving over time.
- The vast majority of parents are supportive of the school and would recommend it. However, there is a minority of parents who feel that they are not well informed about the school's work, particularly about school systems for managing challenging behaviour.

Governance of the school

- The governing body is effective in its work and carries out its statutory duties well. All governors understand their responsibilities to safeguard pupils.
- Following recent governing body appointments, governors now have the skills and understanding to hold school leaders to account for the achievement of all groups of pupils. As a result of governor auditing, all governors now meet every six weeks to review pupils' achievement and progress against school improvement issues. Consequently, they have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for improvement.
- Governors ensure that funding, such as pupil premium funding and the primary physical education and sports grant, is used effectively. Additional funding received by the school helps pupils to make good progress. For example, vulnerable pupils are supported by the school's breakfast club provision. This provision is fully funded by the school and ensures that pupils are on-site before the start of the day and are 'ready to learn'. Sports premium funding has enabled a wider variety of sports clubs, such as gymnastics, dance and multi-sports, that are designed to appeal to all pupils, irrespective of gender or competitive nature.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

- Statutory safeguarding training is in place. All staff and governors have benefited from the school's annual training programme and are fully aware of their duties and responsibilities in keeping pupils safe. All staff and governors know that safeguarding pupils is everybody's business.
- Record-keeping for vulnerable pupils is effective. Leaders take prompt action if they or school staff have any concerns about a child's well-being. Senior leaders, the 'nurture mentor' and the family support worker work closely together to bring about positive changes for vulnerable pupils.
- Pupils feel safe in school. They know that they can trust school staff and talk to them about any concerns they may have. Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe online.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers plan effectively, enabling pupils to learn well. Teachers' high expectations and improved subject knowledge are leading to improvements in the quality of teaching and learning and the use of assessment, which is good overall.
- In the strongest teaching, resources are well planned and selected to support pupils in deepening their conceptual understanding. For example, a group of lower-ability Year 3 pupils were observed using visual cues of pizza toppings to consolidate their understanding of simple fractions.
- Most teachers sustain and build upon pupils' strengths and interests. They correct pupils' misconceptions. Consequently, pupils realise that they can learn from their mistakes. As a result, pupils make good progress.
- The school's assessment policy is followed by the vast majority of teachers. Teachers inform pupils of how well they are doing so that they can be moved on quickly, when appropriate.
- Homework is set in line with the school's policy and supports teaching and learning. It enables consolidation of what is learned in school and supports the good progress pupils make.
- The teaching of reading across the school is now good. Pupils enter the school with a national phonics screening threshold pass level that is well below average. The school has put in place bespoke phonics support for these groups. These pupils read with confidence, enthusiasm and fluency. Their ability to break words up and apply their phonics knowledge to build new words is good. Their progress since September is good.
- Leaders have maintained a focus on writing since the school was previously inspected by Ofsted. Pupils use their work in history particularly well to contextualise their writing. For example, in history, pupils write explanatory texts on how to make a mummy and information posters on Guy Fawkes and the Gunpowder Plot. Pupils' 'write to the top' books illustrate strong progress from Year 2 to Year 6. Writing across the curriculum has improved significantly.

- Mathematics is not so consistently well used across the curriculum. In many cases, pupils do not yet apply their learning in mathematics to the same extent as they do for their writing.
- Teachers consistently apply the school's behaviour policy and ethos in their teaching. As a result, pupils' positive attitudes towards their learning help them to make good progress. Where teaching is strongest, pupils are motivated, engaged and enthused by the challenges offered to them.
- The overwhelming majority of parents say that they are well informed about their children's progress and that pupils are taught well by teachers. Parents do not feel so well informed about school systems to manage behaviour.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils are valued by staff and they show good attitudes towards their learning. Typically, they take pride in their work. They show respect for one another and adults in school.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development ensures that they are reflective and responsible for their actions as good citizens. For example, school assemblies focus around the theme of British values. One display in the school hall shows pupils' learning about Britain's democratic parliamentary system, illustrating a photograph of parliament members voting on topics related to Britain's exit from the European Union.
- Pupils enjoy taking positions of responsibility that are offered to them. For example, Year 6 prefects take responsibility for monitoring and supporting the behaviour and conduct of other pupils as they move around the school. Consequently, pupils travel around the school building calmly and respectfully.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. They trust adults and say that they could talk to them in school if they had a concern. Pupils have a good awareness of how to keep themselves safe online. Older pupils told inspectors that, although there have been issues with bullying and the behaviour of some pupils in the past, this is now rarely the case. Pupils say that adults take appropriate action if required to.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They behave well around school and in lessons. Pupils listen carefully to adults, concentrate and work hard. Any low-level disruption is dealt with effectively and in line with the school's behaviour policy.
- Behaviour around school and in most lessons is good. Pupils are polite and readily speak about their work and life in school.
- The school's appointment of a 'nurture mentor' has reduced incidents of pupils 'falling out' and perceived bullying. Leaders provide good support to a large proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged or vulnerable. As a result, incidents of poor behaviour have been reduced.

- Historically, the attendance of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and of pupils who are disadvantaged has been lower than the national average. As a result of leaders' work, these groups have shown a marked and sustained improvement since the previous inspection. For example, leaders support pupils' attendance and punctuality through provisions such as the school breakfast club. These pupils now attend at a rate above that of pupils nationally.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils' outcomes are improving. At the end of key stage 2, in 2016, the proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standard for reading and writing was in line with the national average. In mathematics, it was above the national average. At the higher standard, pupils achieved in line with the national average in reading and were above the national average in writing and mathematics.
- The progress pupils made from Year 2 to Year 6 in 2016 was above national expectations in reading and was significantly above national expectations in writing and mathematics.
- Provisional 2017 outcomes for Year 6 pupils indicate that pupils' progress in reading and mathematics is broadly in line with the national average. Pupils' progress in writing is significantly above the national average.
- Pupils currently in the school, in all year groups, are making at least good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- In 2017, too few Year 6 disadvantaged pupils met national expectations in reading and mathematics. School leaders have acted swiftly. Targeted support is now in place for disadvantaged pupils currently in the school. The difference between the progress they make and that of other pupils nationally has diminished. This significant group of pupils now achieves at least in line with non-disadvantaged pupils nationally. Current progress for this group is good.

School details

Unique reference number	114704
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10041759

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	355
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Chable
Headteacher	Carl Messer
Telephone number	01206 506 800
Website	www.stgeorgesjunior.org
Email address	admin@st-georgesnewtown-jun.essex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	7–8 December 2015

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- St George's New Town Junior School is larger than the average junior school.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and the number of pupils who speak English as an additional language are above the national averages.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is below the national average.
- The number of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is in line with the national average.
- The school holds the Primary Science Quality Mark.

- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding is well above the national average.
- The school met the government's floor standards for 2016. These are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in all classes. Some of these observations were carried out jointly with members of the senior leadership team.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, teachers, governors and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at documentation, including teachers' planning, the school's analysis of its strengths and weaknesses, information on pupils' attainment and progress, records of behaviour and safety, records of the monitoring of teaching and management of teachers' performance, minutes of governing body meetings and safeguarding documents.
- Discussions were held with groups of pupils, formally and informally, during lessons and breaktimes. The inspectors listened to pupils read and talked to them about books they enjoy.
- Inspectors considered the 68 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as the free-text comments. Views of parents were also sought at the beginning of the school day, at parent-pupil celebration assemblies and during parent-teacher consultation sessions.

Inspection team

Stephen Cloke, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Fyfe Johnston	Ofsted Inspector
Michael Jude	Ofsted Inspector

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