

Inspection of St George's Church of England Academy, Newtown

St George's Street, Birmingham B19 3QY

Inspection dates: 15 and 16 June 2022

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
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The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils learn many things at this well-led school. Staff teach them the difference between right and wrong. Staff also do much to open pupils' eyes to the world beyond Birmingham. There are trips to different places and clubs that introduce pupils to new interests. Outside on the large playground, there is plenty to do. At lunchtime, adults organise playground games and make sure no one feels left out. Throughout the day, staff keep a watchful eye on pupils to make sure they are okay.

Staff are quick to notice and praise good behaviour. When any poor behaviour happens, they spot it and stop it. If a pupil is upset about anything, staff step in and find out why.

Bullying happens occasionally, but adults do not let it continue. They also teach pupils how to spot bullying and what to do if it happens. Pupil prefects set good examples for others to follow and help the school day to run smoothly.

In class, teachers keep pupils busy and help them see the link between effort and success. Reading is taught well, and the school has lots of quality books. Learning in mathematics and some other subjects requires improvement.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders know the local community very well. They are working hard to create an 'oasis of learning' in this busy central Birmingham district. They have more to do to achieve their ambition of a good-quality education for all pupils. However, they are on the right track. The headteacher is a strong role model for staff, pupils and parents to follow.

Staff teach reading well. Leaders have established a consistent, well-resourced and effective approach to early reading. From the start in Reception, staff give children daily phonics lessons and plenty of quality books that match the sounds they are learning. This continues into key stage 1, and beyond for those pupils who need it.

As pupils' reading fluency grows, staff introduce them to an increasingly wide range of books. In addition, adults read aloud to their classes every day. Pupils can name many authors and enjoy talking about stories they know. Leaders keep staff up to date with effective practice in reading and provide lots of helpful guidance. Furthermore, a whole-school focus on vocabulary is building pupils' oracy and comprehension.

The school's work in mathematics is not so well developed. Leaders have set ambitious targets for the curriculum and teaching in this subject, but have yet to realise these. There are several reasons for this. Disruptions caused by the pandemic, changes of staff and gaps in staff subject knowledge and confidence have combined to hinder progress. There are some strengths. In early years, for example, there is a strong focus on number and mathematical language. However, in older year groups, pupils do not learn all that they should.

In most other subject areas, leaders have thought carefully about the sequence of learning. In science and geography, for instance, they have identified the small steps in knowledge that pupils need to grasp in order to make progress. Lessons often begin with mini-quizzes or reminders about earlier learning. This helps pupils to remember important information and to practise using what they know. However, while the design of the curriculum in most subjects is sound, classroom practice varies. In part, this is because the school has been hit hard by staff absence. This has interfered with staff training. In response, leaders have provided curriculum information videos for staff. These readily available resources are helpful and indicative of the school's solution-focused leadership. Even so, there is still more to be done to ensure a smoother learning journey across the school.

The school provides high-quality pastoral support to pupils and their families. Staff provide parents with information about organisations that can help them. On top of this, they put on extra sessions at weekends to help pupils catch up with missed learning due to the pandemic.

St George's is an inclusive school where staff celebrate diversity. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported to access the full curriculum.

Leaders make careful checks on their progress and call on expert advice when needed.

Staff describe the school as a supportive place to work. Leaders give staff regular feedback about their work and set ambitious, yet realistic, expectations for them to aim for. Local governors and trust leaders are well informed about the school's work and performance. They bring a healthy level of challenge and support, which helps to steer school improvement.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders know about local risks and work with different organisations and community leaders to share information when appropriate. They keep staff up to date with requirements and check that they know what to do in different situations.

Through the curriculum, staff teach pupils about the dangers they might face and how to keep themselves safe. The school's systems for recording and responding to concerns are fit for purpose.

If staff spot any changes in a pupil's behaviour or attendance, then they look into it to find out why.

The school carries out all the right checks on staff and visitors.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The mathematics curriculum requires further refinement to ensure it meets all pupils' needs in key stages 1 and 2. Currently, pupils' learning does not progress as well as it might, and they have catching up to do in the older year groups. Leaders should press on with their plans to strengthen curriculum guidance and teaching in mathematics.
- In most foundation subjects, curriculum guidance is in place, but the quality of learning varies across the school. In part, this is due to staff absence and disruptions to staff training. This means that some staff do not have sufficient knowledge or confidence to make the most of the school's current curriculum guidance. Leaders should continue to support and develop staff so that they develop the necessary subject knowledge and experience to teach the planned curriculum well.
- In art and design, and design technology, curriculum guidance could be better. Currently, some classroom activities do not focus on the right things. Leaders know this. They should revisit curriculum guidance in these subjects to ensure that it supports pupils to get better at art and design, and design technology.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	139126
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10210911
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	328
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Sarah Smith
Headteacher	Linda Francis
Website	www.stgnewtown.bham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	13 March 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- St George's is a Church of England primary school. The most recent diocesan inspection under section 48 took place in March 2016. That inspection judged its effectiveness as a church school to be good.
- The school provides breakfast club childcare each morning. It does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- During the inspection, the inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: reading, mathematics, science, design technology, and geography. In these subjects, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at pupils' work. The inspectors also looked at the curriculum in other subjects in less detail to check how they were organised and taught.
- Inspectors noted 2019 performance data about the school and looked at school documents. These included information about behaviour, the curriculum,

governance, attendance and improvement planning. They also checked the school's website and looked at some monitoring reports provided by the academy trust.

- The inspectors asked pupils, staff and leaders about safeguarding arrangements and safety routines. The lead inspector examined the record of employment checks on school staff and looked at other school records.
- The inspectors watched pupils' behaviour in class, at lunchtime, on the playground, at clubs, and at other times during the day.
- During the inspection, the inspectors had formal meetings with the headteacher, other leaders, governors, trust leaders, school staff and pupils.
- Inspectors talked informally with pupils and staff to gather general information about school life. In addition, they took account of the responses to Ofsted's surveys of staff's, pupils' and parents' views. An inspector spoke with parents at school gate.

Inspection team

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