

# Inspection of a good school: St George's Catholic School

The Mount, Taunton, Somerset TA1 3NR

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Inspection dates:

2 and 3 February 2023

## Outcome

St George's Catholic School continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

The school's ambition for pupils to grow in 'mind, body and spirit' drives leaders, staff and pupils. Staff have high expectations for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils meet these expectations. They are proud to belong to such a kind and caring school. One parent, typical of many, told the inspector that staff 'genuinely care about our children and want them to do their very best'.

Pupils feel happy and safe at the school. They maintain focus in lessons. Pupils play cooperatively with each other at breaktimes and lunchtimes. They celebrate each other's achievements. Pupils learn to respect differences. The promotion of equality and diversity is a priority for leaders. Pupils know staff will help them resolve any problems if they need to. Bullying is extremely rare.

The St George's Passport is an important feature of the school. It provides everyone with rich and varied experiences. Children in Reception learn how to improve mental health by baking bread and watching clouds. Older pupils experience getting lost in a maze to learn about resilience and everyone enjoys trying food from other cultures. These memorable experiences contribute to a rich and vibrant curriculum.

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

Leaders have designed an ambitious curriculum. Subject leaders are knowledgeable. 'Wow events' instil inspiring introductions to termly learning. In some subjects, such as mathematics and early reading, leaders have thought carefully about the precise knowledge pupils should learn and in which order. Staff are well trained to teach the curriculum. The development of the curriculum in a small number of foundation subjects is not yet complete. In these subjects, the sequence of learning is not detailed enough to ensure that teachers know precisely what to teach. As a result, pupils do not learn the curriculum as well as they could. However, leaders know exactly what they need to do to refine and embed the curriculum in all subjects.

In Reception, leaders have thought carefully about the curriculum. They have designed activities to help children get off to the best possible start. The learning environment inside is vibrant and inviting. Throughout the school, the teaching of mathematics is strong. Pupils, including pupils with SEND, use their knowledge well to solve problems. Pupils are highly engaged in their lessons.

Staff skilfully use assessment to correct gaps or misconceptions. Routines are well established for checking pupils' understanding. Assessment supports pupils to learn the curriculum. Older pupils learn how to identify their own mistakes. They work independently to correct their own errors. Pupils who might be in danger of falling behind receive extra support to keep up.

Reading is at the heart of the curriculum. Leaders' mantra of 'by learning to read you can read to learn' is evident in the high priority placed on teaching early reading. Welcoming libraries and vibrant book displays in classrooms encourage pupils to read widely. Leaders have ensured that staff teaching phonics are experts. Staff deliver reading lessons and interventions in a systematic way. Children begin to learn to read from the minute they join Reception. Books are well matched to the sounds pupils know. Staff check pupils' learning regularly. There is a strong focus on fluency and expression throughout the school.

Pupils behave well and are highly respectful of each other. In lessons, pupils engage well with learning. They work effectively with their peers. There are a small number of pupils who occasionally exhibit more challenging behaviour. Staff deal calmly and effectively with these pupils. From the minute they join the school, children in Reception learn how to share and take turns. Older pupils relish the opportunity to become play leaders to support younger children at breaktime and lunchtime.

The broader development of pupils is a strength of the school. Pupils learn age-appropriate personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHE and C). Based on the St George's Passport, pupils engage in a plethora of opportunities to develop leadership skills and character. The wide range of clubs and activities enables pupils to develop talents and interests. Pupils learn about empathy through collective worship and organising charitable events, such as making donations to the local homeless charity and food bank. They enjoy singing at the local residential homes. Leaders use the school's indoor swimming pool to teach all pupils to learn to swim well. Leaders ensure that all pupils, including pupils with SEND, experience the opportunity to represent the school at a sporting gala or competition.

Governors provide excellent support and challenge for leaders and staff. They are thoughtful in their approach. Staff are very proud to work here. They appreciate the individual care and consideration given to them by leaders.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders, including governors, are meticulous in the way they ensure that children are kept safe. Leaders have created a strong culture of safeguarding. Staff receive appropriate and timely safeguarding training. All staff know how to identify concerns and report these using the effective school systems. Leaders are diligent in their follow-up. The school ensures that families who require support get the help they need.

Underpinned by the school values, pupils learn how to keep themselves healthy as part of the comprehensive PSHE and C curriculum. Leaders ensure that children learn how to keep themselves safe online through computing and internet safety lessons.

## What does the school need to do to improve?

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some foundation subjects, leaders have not yet identified the knowledge that pupils need to learn precisely enough. Pupils do not always learn as well as they could in these subjects. Leaders need to continue to refine the curriculum content so that pupils build knowledge systematically over time and achieve well across the whole curriculum.

## Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in October 2017.

## 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.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	123851
<b>Local authority</b>	Somerset
<b>Inspection number</b>	10256790
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	225
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Helen MacConnell
<b>Headteacher</b>	Edwina McDonnell
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.st-georges-somerset.org.uk">www.st-georges-somerset.org.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	10 and 11 October 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The headteacher has been in post since September 2022.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.
- It was last inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 in July 2022.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector held meetings with senior leaders of the school, members of staff and pupils and spoke with parents and carers as they arrived at school.
- The inspector met with representatives of the governing body. She also held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority and the diocese.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and physical education. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector also heard

pupils read. The inspector also reviewed curriculum thinking and a small sample of work in science and history.

- To inspect safeguarding, the inspector reviewed a wide range of safeguarding documents and records, including the school's record of recruitment checks. The inspector also talked to a range of staff and pupils about safeguarding.
- The inspector spoke with staff, pupils and parents to gather their views. They considered 76 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including 37 free-text comments. Inspectors also took account of 26 responses to the staff survey and 147 responses to the pupil survey.

### **Inspection team**

Linda Culling, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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