

INSPECTION REPORT

ST GEORGE'S R.C. PRIMARY SCHOOL

Eagle Way, Shoeburyness

LEA area: Southend

Unique reference number: 115149

Headteacher: Mr James Bardy

Reporting inspector: Ms B. Pollard
Rgl OFSTED Inspector No: 1838

Dates of inspection: 20th – 22nd November 2000

Inspection number: 224546

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: infant & junior
School category: voluntary aided
Age range of pupils: 4 - 11
Gender of pupils: mixed

School address: Eagle Way
Shoeburyness
Essex

Postcode: SS3 9RN

Telephone number: 01702 293522

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Appropriate authority: governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr Peter Holmes

Date of previous inspection: June 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St George's Catholic Primary School has 195 children on roll and is about the same size as most other primary schools. The local population is expanding with new housing being built as part of an economic regeneration scheme. Children begin school at four years and leave at age eleven. Most children (97 per cent) have a United Kingdom heritage and there are 2 children who speak English as an additional language. The number of children on the school's register of special educational needs is 21 which is 11 per cent of the school's population and is below the national average; there are two children with statements. The percentage entitled to free meals (5 per cent) is below the national average. The majority of children come from homes in favourable circumstances and assessments undertaken soon after children enter the reception class show that around 70 per cent of children have average, or above, abilities.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very good school where children attain high standards by the time they leave. The quality of education provided is high and the strong Christian ethos, which underpins all aspects of school life, has a very positive influence of the personal development of children and makes a significant impact on their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school provides good value for money. Its strengths greatly outweigh the few weaknesses.

What the school does well

- Standards in English, mathematics, science and music are very good by age eleven.
- The quality of teaching is very good and contributes to the high standards achieved.
- The very good leadership and management have high expectations and set challenging targets for further improvement.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a great strength and helps children develop into mature, caring individuals with respect for themselves and others.

What could be improved

- Provision for information and communication technology does not yet meet National Curriculum requirements.
- The Foundation Stage (for the under-fives) needs a clearer identity and improved resources.
- The school's development plan needs to be shorter, more manageable and more precise in establishing priorities for improvement for the coming year.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good progress in addressing the issues raised in the previous inspection in June 1996.

The school is maintaining its high standards as shown by its results in national tests at seven and eleven years. Attainment in design and technology and information and communication technology (ICT) has improved through the training of staff and better resources although there is still much to be done in ICT to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum. The situation should improve when the current building project on a new ICT suite is completed and the school is fully operational in all its planned systems.

The curriculum is broader than it was. The national literacy and numeracy hours have been very effectively introduced and national guidance on National Curriculum subjects from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) are being used. More rigorous measures to improve the monitoring and effectiveness of teaching and learning within the curriculum have been introduced.

The school has built on the good support of parents by involving them in curriculum meetings, open days and by providing better information on schoolwork and homework. Many help in classes and attendance at meetings is high.

The purchase of resources now focuses on materials that will encourage children to become more independent learners and it is planned that ICT will provide more opportunities for this through research on facilities such as the Internet.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	A	A	A	A
mathematics	A	A	A*	A
science	A	A*	A	A

Key	
very high	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

The school's performance coded A* means that standards are in the top 5 per cent nationally. At the end of the Foundation Stage (when children transfer from the reception class to Year 1), nearly all children reach the national learning goals set for the age-group in all areas of learning and they have begun the early stages of the National Curriculum. At age seven, standards are well above the national average in reading, writing and science and they are above average in mathematics. At age eleven, standards rise even further and in English and science they are well above average and very high in mathematics when compared with national figures. When compared with schools with similar characteristics (based on the numbers entitled to free meals) the school also performs well in that at age seven, standards are well above average in reading and writing and average in mathematics; at age eleven, standards are well above average in all the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Improvement over time is broadly in line with the national trend. The work seen during this inspection confirms this attainment. Children make good progress as they move through the school and by the time they leave, the majority reach the higher levels of the National Curriculum i.e. Level 5. It was not possible to see all the other subjects of the National Curriculum during the inspection but of those seen, attainment was at least sound and in line with national expectations. Music is a particular strength. There is room for improvement in ICT. The school is meeting the challenging targets it has set in the core subjects of English mathematics and science and it is on the way to achieving them in ICT. Religious education was inspected separately by a diocesan team.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Children show very positive attitudes to their work and are eager to do well.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is very good; the school is an orderly, pleasant community.
Personal development and relationships	Children leave the school as articulate, confident and mature individuals.
Attendance	Attendance is very good; it is well above average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Very good	Very good	Very good

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

In 97 per cent of lessons seen, teaching was sound or better. It was very good or excellent in 60 per cent of instances. In only one observation was teaching unsatisfactory. It is a great strength of the school and is one of the reasons why standards are so high. It is consistently very good in the Foundation Stage and Key Stages 1 and 2. Particular strengths are lesson planning, assessments of what children can do and what they need to do next and classroom management and organisation. Literacy and numeracy are taught very effectively and help to enhance standards in other subjects. A significant factor is the high expectations of teachers which result in demanding work and targets for learning - a principle which applies to all children whether they have special educational needs or are fast learners. Staff are confident in their expertise except in the area of ICT where further training is required.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The curriculum is broad and balanced and enriched by educational visits and visitors to school. There are still weaknesses in ICT provision and activities and resources for the under-fives need upgrading.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Children are well integrated into school life and the very good quality support they receive enables them to make good progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very good. Children receive a lot of help and support and make rapid progress as their confidence grows.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	A strength of the school. The strong Catholic ethos pervades every aspect of the school's life. Acts of worship make a significant contribution.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good care is taken of children; staff have a shared vision of a community where consideration for others is paramount.

The school is particularly proud of its high standards in music and children benefit from specialist teaching both within the staff and from the peripatetic instrumental teaching service.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Dynamic leadership and very effective management and teamwork provide clear direction for the work of the school. The school's development plan needs simplifying to make it easier to read and follow.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors make a very good contribution to the management of the school and are actively involved.
The school's evaluation of its performance	There are many strategies to monitor and evaluate the success of the school's performance and rigorous targets are set to improve standards.
The strategic use of resources	These are used very effectively and efficiently to raise attainment. The new computer suite should improve standards in ICT.
Best value principles	These are understood and are being applied to all decisions.

The leadership and management are great strengths. Expectations are high and, although the school achieves very good results, staff are not complacent and constantly strive to improve. The current school development plan is too detailed and too unwieldy for easy access and regular use. It needs simplifying so that annual priorities are clear and unambiguous so that staff can identify easily whether they are on target or not.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching is good • Children are well behaved • Children are expected to work hard • Children like school • Parents are comfortable about approaching school • Children become mature and responsible • Children make good progress • The school is led and managed well • They are happy with the levels of homework 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision for the range of activities outside lessons

The school receives a high level of support from the overwhelming majority of parents and carers and inspectors endorse the positive comments made in the survey. Of the parents who responded to the questionnaires, around a third would like a more interesting range of activities outside lessons. Current activities provided outside lessons focus mainly on sport and the choir. The school is willing to review its after-school clubs in response to this survey.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Standards in English, mathematics, science and music are very good by age eleven

1. By the time they leave the school, children achieve standards that are well above the national average in English and science and they are very high in mathematics. Standards in music exceed the national expectations.
2. In the reception class, children are introduced to demanding work that enables them to establish secure foundations for the National Curriculum. Soon after entry to school they begin to read and write; they learn to count accurately and recognise numbers up to ten and then to twenty and beyond.
3. In Key Stages 1 and 2, the work in English is built on in a very carefully structured way that helps children to make steady progress towards the goals for literacy set for them by the end of Year 6. They read fluently with understanding and expression. Their writing is varied and imaginative using correct punctuation, an extensive vocabulary and good spelling strategies. Speaking and listening skills are particular strengths. Children in Year 6 can participate fully in debates and discussions ranging from the style of various authors, the merits of the Harry Potter books to the issues surrounding the election processes of the recent American presidency.
4. In mathematics, children in Year 6 can multiply and divide numbers with confidence because of the firm foundation laid in Key Stage 1 work on addition and subtraction. They can explain how they arrive at their answers using correct mathematical vocabulary. They have a very good knowledge of regular and irregular shapes and their properties and understand symmetry. They are very knowledgeable about fractions and decimals. They are especially good at mental calculations because of regular practice which begins in Key Stage 1.
5. In science, children in the reception class begin to learn about changes that take place in activities like cooking and they learn the names of various materials. In Key Stage 1 they develop more understanding of how materials react in different situations and they begin to appreciate the need for fair testing. In Key Stage 2, children are able to set up, carry out and report on their own experiments. Years 5 and 6 can devise their own fair tests, predict and record their findings in various ways and they appreciate the necessity for accuracy and the need to restrict variables as seen in work on shadows and evaporation. They use their very good knowledge of scientific processes in intelligent reviews of their findings.
6. High achievements in literacy and numeracy are used very effectively in other subjects such as history, geography and personal, social and health education where children's very good communication skills enable them to discuss the impact of events in the past on the present and their responsibility for stewardship of the environment.
7. Musical ability is enhanced by the use of specialist teachers on the staff and weekly instrumental teaching from the peripatetic music service. All children are taught to read music and this begins in a simple form in the reception class where four year olds were seen drawing pictures of the order in which they had decided to play untuned percussion instruments. Key Stage 1 reach remarkable standards in singing in that they show an understanding of melody, pitch and character. They sing, in tune, loudly or softly and they are learning to breathe correctly in order to phrase the melody accurately as seen in a rehearsal for the Christmas production. In Key

Stage 2, standards in singing are maintained and children learn music appreciation through expressing their thoughts and feelings in various ways which include making pictures and discussions. They can talk about instruments, style, repetition, speed and tempo. Those learning instruments reach high standards and practise at home to reach the targets set for them.

The quality of teaching is very good and contributes to the high standards achieved

8. Teaching is consistently good in the Foundation Stage and Key Stages 1 and 2. It is often excellent. A significant factor in the success of the teaching is the high expectations that teachers have.
9. In the reception year a wide range of carefully structured activities helps children to develop a love of literature, gain confidence in numeracy and encourage an interest in the world around them. The strong focus on personal and social development helps them to settle quickly into the routines and establishes positive attitudes to learning. Praise is used effectively. The teacher and nursery nurse work very well together; they have a shared philosophy and this means a consistent approach to children.
10. In both Key Stages 1 and 2, teachers plan in great detail what children need to do in order to make progress. This planning is based on rigorous analysis of assessments which are used to set targets for improvement. Teachers are confident and knowledgeable about most subjects and they are highly skilled at questioning children to check what they know and understand. The pace of lessons is brisk and timed tasks keep children working hard.
11. Support staff are deployed very effectively, particularly for those children with special educational needs. They make a significant contribution to the standards achieved as they are, generally, well briefed about what children should learn from lessons.
12. The very good teaching helps all children, whatever their abilities, make good progress. The well structured lessons build learning on previous work in a cumulative way so that children gradually increase their knowledge and understanding. Teachers are not complacent and seek ways of improving their techniques through training and the introduction of local and national initiatives.

The very good leadership and management have high expectations and set challenging targets for improvement.

13. The dynamic leadership of the headteacher and key staff is supported very well by an active and committed staff and governing body. The strong team spirit leads to a cohesion in the school and children benefit from the consistent approach to teaching and learning. Relationships are a great strength and the school's mission statement supports every aspect of its life.
14. Targets for improvement are the result of consultation and the progress made towards them is regularly reviewed. Those with responsibilities are clear about their roles and confident in carrying out the work required. Expectations are high and staff work hard to fulfil them. Although the school's attainment is very good, the senior management team is not complacent and is constantly looking for ways to improve performance.
15. The governing body keeps a close watch on the use of funds and has appropriate procedures for ensuring that money is used wisely, grants are directed at the relevant

targets and that evaluations of the effectiveness of spending in raising standards are carried out.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a great strength and helps children develop into mature, caring individuals with respect for themselves and others.

16. The school places great emphasis on spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and the provision is very good in all these aspects. The strong Christian ethos pervades all parts of school life and the daily acts of worship make a significant contribution to children's spirituality. Children show reverence when praying and they are provided with many opportunities to reflect on their own experiences and those of others in assemblies and in lessons in the classroom.
17. The school promotes a very strong moral code based on the teachings of Christ. It teaches children right from wrong and helps them to consider the consequences of their actions on those around them. Behaviour is very good in and out of the classroom. Children are polite, respectful and move around school quietly and in an orderly way. The school is cultivating the notion of good citizenship and, as a result, children become mature, sensitive and thoughtful members of the school's community.
18. The school actively provides many opportunities for children to collaborate with one another in pairs, small groups or as members of a class. The choir and team games help them to understand the concept of loyalty and that everyone needs to play their part. The warm relationships between staff and children help children to feel secure. There is a strong sense of community and the school is often described as a 'family'. Social awareness is extended by public performances of concerts such as Noah's Ark and by working with other local schools in singing.
19. Children learn about their own culture through links with the church, the curriculum and their interest in the media. History teaches them about invaders and settlers such as the Vikings and they compare their lifestyle with that of Victorian children. Displays around school show the extent of teaching about other cultures through literature, major world religions, visits to galleries and historical topics such as the Ancient Greeks. In geography, they appreciate, and show respect for, the way other people live and are encouraged to learn about their beliefs and practices. Resources such as books and teaching materials reflect the multicultural nature of society.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Provision for information and communication technology does not yet meet National Curriculum requirements.

20. This was identified as a weakness in the last inspection and although much has been done to improve standards there is still some way to go to meet all the requirements of the National Curriculum in information and communication technology (ICT). During the time of the inspection building work was underway on a computer suite and this meant some disruption to the ICT provision as computers were housed in a temporary space. Nevertheless, there was insufficient evidence to show that ICT is an integral part of the curriculum and that aspects of its use are incorporated into the delivery of those subjects where its use would enrich learning. Children are learning word-processing skills and they can save data, retrieve and use information appropriately but, as yet, they have no facility for electronic mailing nor can they access the internet for purposes of research. This should improve when the new suite is finished.

21. The range of applications using computers is limited, for example, children are not using a computer for composing music nor are they using sensing equipment to record changes in temperature. There is still a need for staff training as not all teachers are confident with the demands of the ICT curriculum. The current situation limits the abilities of children to show what they can do. The school is well aware of this and ICT has top priority in the school's development plan. Staff are working hard to improve their own skills and incorporate more ICT into their curriculum planning.

The Foundation Stage needs a clearer identity and improved resources.

22. Since September 2000 the four and five olds in the school come under the title of the Foundation Stage which has its own curriculum and targets for learning called early learning goals. Staff incorporate these into the activities provided in the reception class but the current environment does not meet all the needs of the age-group. The classroom needs upgrading to make it easier to match the demands of the curriculum to the youngest children in school. Some of the furniture is old and some of the fittings are inflexible. Furniture which can be moved to create work bays and role-play areas is required. Some important displays, such as the alphabet, are at an inappropriate height and too high for children to see easily because of a lack of appropriate display boards. Although there is a good range of wheeled toys available in the outdoor play area, children have to use the equipment of the older pupils in their physical education lessons in the hall; they need climbing and balancing equipment more suitable for their age and stage of development. A policy document for the Foundation Stage would enhance the status of this part of the school and give it a clearer identity.

The school's development plan needs to be shorter, more manageable and more precise in establishing priorities for the coming year.

23. A great deal of effort has gone into the production of the school's plan for improvement. It is 76 pages long, covers three years and is very detailed and comprehensive. It is not easy to read and the order of the priorities is not as clear as it could be. It would be improved if the priorities for raising standards for the coming year were extracted and presented in a simplified layout that helps all concerned with the school to understand exactly what needs to be done, how to achieve the targets and how to measure progress towards the planned outcomes. It ought to be an accessible, working tool for development.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

24. The school should:
- i.* ensure that National Curriculum requirements for information and communication technology are met within the next twelve months (if possible) by;
 - completing and making efficient use of the computer suite;
 - providing further staff training;
 - incorporating ICT into the lesson plans for all subjects where appropriate;
 - ii.* give the Foundation Stage a clearer identity by:
 - upgrading the furniture and equipment;
 - producing a policy document that highlights the separate curriculum and stage of development of the children in the reception class;
 - iii.* review the presentation and layout of the school's development plan so that it provides clearer direction and guidance for staff on the annual priorities for improvement.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	30
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	17

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
17	43	27	10	3	0	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		195
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		9

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		21

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	4
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	7

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.5
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2
National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2000	17	13

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	16	14	16
	Girls	13	13	12
	Total	29	27	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	97 (90)	90 (90)	93 (90)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	16	14	16
	Girls	13	13	12
	Total	29	27	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	97 (86)	90 (90)	93 (90)
	National	86 (82)	83 (86)	85 (87)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2000	15	15

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	15	14	15
	Girls	14	14	14
	Total	29	28	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	97 (93)	93 (85)	97 (96)
	National	75 (70)	71 (69)	84 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	7	10	10
	Girls	11	11	11
	Total	18	21	21
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	60 (85)	69 (85)	69 (92)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	2
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	2
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	172
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26
Average class size	28

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	89

Financial information

Financial year	2000
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	£
Total income	440723
Total expenditure	480701
Expenditure per pupil	1769
Balance brought forward from previous year	48978
Balance carried forward to next year	9000

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	290
Number of questionnaires returned	148

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	74	23	1	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	67	25	7	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	64	34	3	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	53	36	5	5	0
The teaching is good.	70	26	1	1	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	39	43	15	3	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	67	28	3	3	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	77	22	1	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	50	36	9	5	0
The school is well led and managed.	62	27	4	6	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	67	27	4	1	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	32	25	23	14	6