



St George's New Town Junior School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 114704
LEA ESSEX LEA
Inspection number 279435
Inspection dates 7 November 2005 to 8 November 2005
Reporting inspector Mr. Peter Lewis LI

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

Type of school	Junior	School address	Canterbury Road
School category	Community		CO2 7RU
Age range of pupils	7 to 11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01206506800
Number on roll	250	Fax number	01206506801
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr. Stuart Gibson
Date of previous inspection	27 September 1999	Headteacher	Mr. Carl Messer

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors

Description of the school

This popular junior school is located in a residential area in the centre of Colchester in which there is a high proportion of social housing. Parents are generally very supportive and the school's population is very stable. There are high levels of pupils entitled to free school meals and this number is rising. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is higher than is usually found and most children start the school with standards that are below average. Most of the children in the school come from white British families. Of the small number who are from other backgrounds, almost all speak English at home.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good and improving school that knows itself very well. This is demonstrated in the complete agreement between the findings of the inspection team and the school's self-evaluation. The school provides its children with a good quality education which prepares them well for the next stage in their education. Achievement is good and children attain higher than average standards in English, mathematics and science. Most children, including those who have special educational needs, make good progress from a below average starting point. Teaching is good and teachers provide a broad range of interesting activities for most pupils. However, there are inconsistencies in, for example, teachers' use of assessment to provide more able-children with sufficient challenge. As a result, they do not always make as much progress as they could, particularly in writing and mathematics. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and as a result, their personal development is also good. The quality of care is good. The school has an inclusive and very positive ethos and all staff work hard together as a team to ensure that all children feel confident and safe in all that they do in school. The views of parents are regularly sought and are acted upon promptly. Improvement since the last inspection is good and the school has dealt effectively with the issues identified. Leadership and management are good. The leadership and management of the headteacher are very good and he has achieved a great deal in a short time. The school is aware of the need to further develop the roles of senior and middle managers and has put in place a good range of strategies to achieve this. Governance is satisfactory. The governors have an appropriate understanding of the school's strengths and where it needs to improve. The scope for further improvement is good. The value for money the school provides is good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop teachers' use of assessment so that it helps teachers to set targets which challenge all children fully, and particularly the more able. - Ensure that teachers plan work that is suited to the needs of all children, including the more able. - Review the roles of all staff with management responsibilities so that they are enabled to play a full part in securing improvement. - Increase the amount of taught time to at least the recommended minimum.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Though children have below average standards when they start at the school, they attain above average standards in English, mathematics and science by the time they reach Year 6. This is confirmed by the school's performance in national tests in 2004 where results were above average in all three subjects. The school's analysis of results from 2005 demonstrate that this pattern has been maintained. Boys and girls achieve similar standards. Children, including those with special educational needs, make good progress although the more able are not always provided with activities that challenge

them sufficiently. This was reflected in the national tests in which the proportion of pupils who attained the higher than expected Level 5 standard was below average in 2004. Modifications to the way in which children are grouped ensured that there was some improvement in 2005, but the school recognises that further improvement is required.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Provision for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Their understanding of other ways of life and different faiths is good. Children fully understand the difference between right and wrong and are very considerate and supportive towards each other. The school provides an environment in which children clearly enjoy their learning and behave very well. While children work very well together in groups, some are overly reliant on their teachers. These children tend not to take the initiative often enough and are not sufficiently independent. Attendance is satisfactory. The school works effectively to encourage children to adopt a healthy lifestyle. They are aware of the need to stay safe, eat healthily and of the importance of taking regular exercise. Many children enjoy taking part in the various sporting activities provided by the school. Children are becoming increasingly aware of their responsibilities in the local and wider community. They are sensitive to the needs of others, including those less fortunate than themselves. Children learn the basic skills of literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology (ICT) well and this is helping them to understand how they can contribute to their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching across the school is good, with examples of very good practice. In the best lessons, teachers make good use of questioning and discussion to develop children's self-confidence and to stretch their understanding of new ideas at all levels. Behaviour management strategies are positive and effective; allowing children to learn at a rapid pace. The very good collaboration between teachers and learning support assistants ensures that the needs of slower learners and those with English as an additional language are well met. The school has worked hard to develop consistent lesson planning and teachers generally make good use of this in providing activities that excite and challenge children. Those with lower attainment and with special educational needs are well supported. However, in some lessons insufficient demands are made upon some of the more able children and they don't always make the progress of which they are capable. Throughout the school, teachers have begun to use assessments of children's learning well when planning subsequent work. In English and mathematics, teachers often encourage children to be aware of how well they are doing and what they need to do in order to improve. However, this good practice is

not applied consistently in all classes and subjects. The school has identified the need to target particular groups of children who could be helped to do better, for example, in writing, and has made a very good start to the implementation of this plan.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory curriculum that is broad and balanced, and generally meets the children's needs. However, the amount of time spent on formal teaching and learning is below that recommended nationally. The school has carefully identified changes to the curriculum which are planned to improve provision, and inspectors agree with these proposals. These include the teaching of key skills across all subjects and a review of the curriculum to ensure that there are sufficient creative and practical activities to help make learning even more enjoyable. Staff and specialist providers offer a good range of clubs after school. These are popular and successfully develop the children's interests and skills. People visit the school to talk about various aspects of their work and children visit local places of interest which enrich their knowledge of specific subjects such as history. Provision for pupils who have learning difficulties is good. New developments such as the interactive whiteboards and up-dated computer suite have improved resources in ICT. These are helping to motivate children and enhance their learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school cares for all children well. Any issues regarding their safety and well-being are taken very seriously. The governing body has a satisfactory range of policies, including those for child protection, to ensure that children are not exposed to avoidable risks. The provision made for children who have learning difficulties is very good and enables them to learn well. The school assesses the attainment and progress of all children accurately. However, some children are unclear about the targets set for them to achieve and are not sufficiently aware of how well they are doing. The school takes full account of the 'Every Child Matters' agenda and works effectively to ensure all children benefit fully from this. It provides the ethos in which children enjoy their lessons and become increasingly confident and competent learners. The school works satisfactorily in partnership with parents and other agencies to ensure that children make good progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good and are considerably enhanced by the inspirational leadership provided by the newly-appointed headteacher. He demonstrates a clear commitment to achieving the very best. The school's evaluation of its effectiveness is comprehensive and accurate and is reflected in the very clear development plan which has already begun to secure further improvement in, for

example, the way in which assessment is used to help teachers to plan work that challenges all children. There is a clear sense of purpose that is fully shared by all staff who, as a result, work very well as a team. The capacity for further improvement is good. Key staff are developing their roles satisfactorily, although the school has recognised in its planning that more could be achieved. The roles of senior managers and subject leaders, for example, have only very recently been closely linked to priorities identified in the development plan and until now this has limited the part they are able to play in securing improvement. Governance is satisfactory. Through the headteacher's clear and open reports, meetings and visits, the governing body is kept well informed. Planned improvements have already identified the need for focused visits to further strengthen governors' understanding of the effectiveness of their school. Financial management is very effective in the way in which resources are allocated to identified priorities. Value for money is good.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. We thoroughly enjoyed learning about your school and the things that you enjoy and that help you to learn well. This letter is to tell you about some of the important things we saw. We were really impressed with the very polite and grown-up way that you talked to us about your school. We particularly enjoyed meeting the school council who told us a lot about the things you like doing at school. We think you go to a safe and caring school where all the staff and governors are interested in what you do and know you well. We have asked your teachers to work hard on finding new ways to help you know more about how well you are doing, in providing work that is more challenging for some of you and allowing slightly more time for you to learn during the day. Mr Messer wants to involve all your teachers in making the school even better for you and we agree. They have very good plans for doing this, that match what we have suggested. We know that when they put these plans into action your school will be even more exciting than it is now. It was good to find out that so many of you were happy at school, and that your parents said you were happy there as well. Keep working hard and enjoy your time at St George's!