



St George's School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 118227
LEA Isle of Wight LEA
Inspection number 280270
Inspection dates 21 June 2006 to 22 June 2006
Reporting inspector Mike Smith AI

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

Type of school	Special	School address	Watergate Rd
School category	Community special		NEWPORT
Age range of pupils	11 to 19		PO30 1XW
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01983524634
Number on roll	129	Fax number	01983533911
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Alison Child
Date of previous inspection	19 June 2000	Headteacher	Acting John Murfitt

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
11 to 19	21 June 2006 - 22 June 2006	280270

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

St George's is a community special school for pupils aged 11-19 on the Isle of Wight. All pupils have statements of special educational need. The school was re-designated in September 2003 to include pupils with moderate and severe learning difficulties, physical impairment, autistic spectrum and behavioural, emotional, and social difficulties, as well as other pupils with more complex needs. Many pupils come from poor socio-economical backgrounds and the great majority of pupils are White British. There are more than twice as many boys as girls in the school. Although the school is currently led by a consultant headteacher, who started in January 2006, a permanent headteacher has been appointed to commence in September this year. The school was awarded the Healthy School status in June 2005 and is a partner in the national programme for Creative Partnerships.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

St George's is an inclusive school that provides a good education for all its pupils. The school judged its own effectiveness as good and the inspection agrees. The very experienced consultant headteacher has managed, in a short period of time, with good support from the acting deputy and senior staff, to implement a number of strategies that have contributed to improvements in the areas of previous concern. These included pupils' behaviour, progress and aspects of teaching and learning. There is now a clear vision of school improvement and how it may come about. Since the re-designation of the school, a small number of parents have been concerned about issues relating to behaviour and their child's progress and are unclear of the improvement strategies being implemented by the school.

The quality of teaching, learning and support is good and occasionally excellent, although the very best practice, including the use of assessment, is not yet effectively shared across the school. Pupils enjoy their learning and make at least good progress, particularly with their personal development and in some areas of the curriculum, for example, art and design. However, there is insufficient use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support pupils' learning. The curriculum is developing well to meet the wide range of pupils' needs, although staff still need further access to appropriate training to ensure they can fully support pupils' needs. Overall, behaviour is good and pupils enjoy coming to school to meet and socialise with their friends. Governance is very strong and there is active involvement in school self-evaluation and strategic management. The school knows what it is good at and what it needs to do to get better and it has a good capacity to further improve. The school provides good value for money.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 3

The inspection agrees with the school that the overall effectiveness and efficiency of the post-16 provision is satisfactory. Improvement strategies have been implemented to increase the range of curriculum and accreditation opportunities that were identified as weaknesses. Students have access to appropriate life-skill activities, work-related opportunities and accredited courses. They are well prepared for life after school and their achievement and progress are satisfactory.

What the school should do to improve further

- ensure that the best teaching practice and use of assessment within the school is effectively shared and consistently delivered.
- ensure that parents are kept fully informed of the school's improvement strategies.
- ensure that all staff have effective access to training opportunities that will support curriculum development, especially in the sixth form, including the use of ICT to support pupils' learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 3

Overall, pupils make good progress throughout the school in relation to their learning difficulties and their challenging individual targets. Due to the nature of their learning difficulties, pupils' standards of achievement are below those of their mainstream peers. Individual pupils' progress is carefully recorded and evaluated over time, and pupils' data are carefully analysed to ensure that individuals or groups of pupils are making the expected rate of progress. Pupils achieve well as a result of their individual needs being met by the well-delivered curriculum and the good quality of teaching, therapy and medical support they receive. Pupils in Year 11 achieve well in a range of accredited courses across a number of subjects, including art and design at GCSE level. Students in the sixth form follow accredited courses at a variety of levels and are making satisfactory progress. However, the curriculum they are offered is not sufficiently wide and challenging to meet all their needs. Pupils' effort and achievement are celebrated in the classroom and within the school community.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good as a result of the positive support of all staff, who put the needs of the pupils first and take a genuine interest in their achievement. The good quality of provision means that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also good. Pupils' behaviour has recently improved and is now generally good. When necessary, pupils are helped to improve their behaviour and meet the high standard that is expected of them. Attendance is good and pupils enjoy coming to school and meeting up with their friends and they feel safe. One pupil said, 'I like talking to my friends and playing outside'. Pupils are regularly asked their views and a very recent pupil survey has just been completed and is being discussed. Pupils are given a range of responsibilities which increase their contribution to the community, including assisting the wheelchair users around the school. Pupils' participation and achievement are well displayed around the school, including work related learning, enterprise projects, charity events, sporting events and impressive art and design work. This gives them pride in their work. Pupils understand the importance of exercise and healthy eating. Individual support ensures that pupils are developing the necessary skills that will support them in the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy their learning because activities are made interesting and they receive individual support that ensures they make progress. Teaching is good overall, with

examples of excellence across the school. Learning targets are generally well matched to pupils' individual needs and learning support assistants, therapists and the school nurse ensure that pupils' care needs are fully met so they can fully participate and get the best out of lessons.

Assessment of pupils' progress is increasingly being used well to inform planning and generally ensures work is carefully matched to pupils' needs. The best practice is acknowledged, but has yet to be effectively shared across the school in order to further increase its consistency. There is effective monitoring of lessons by senior staff and supportive feedback is given to help teachers further improve. In the very best lessons, teachers provide a wide range of motivating activities that meet the needs of all pupils, and are based upon their previous learning and achievement. There is effective use of signing and visual aids, and the deployment of learning support assistants is very carefully considered. Pupils are very clear how they can improve and learning is a rewarding experience for them. At every opportunity, achievement and effort are celebrated and progress is carefully monitored and recorded.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 3

The curriculum is developing well and is increasingly meeting the wide range of pupils' needs, including those pupils with sensory impairments. However, there is insufficient use of ICT to support pupils' learning. The school is aware that because of the increasingly complex learning needs of some pupils, the curriculum is constantly in need of review and improvement to ensure all these needs are effectively being met. Pupils follow appropriate subject programmes and accredited courses that are relevant to their lives. School experiences are enhanced by visitors coming to the school and there are helpful links with a wide variety of local businesses. Carefully planned visits outside school and lunchtime clubs help improve pupils' social and life skills. Older pupils have the opportunity through various schemes to develop enterprise, financial skills and work in teams. Last year a group gave a successful presentation at the Chamber of Commerce Conference about their school project 'Radio Dragon'. There are good links with the local college and older students are well prepared for the future through vocational studies, work related learning, accredited courses and work experience placements. The school has a range of specialist accommodation for practical activities and is set in extensive grounds that are well maintained and imaginatively developed to enhance pupils' learning. Art and design is a strength of the school and as part of the Creative Partnership Programme the school has developed good links with outside partners and is now working towards specialist school status in recognition of its excellence in creative arts. The curriculum in the sixth form is satisfactory; the school is widening the range and challenge of its courses for sixth form students to meet their learning needs more effectively.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care, guidance and support given to all pupils is good and the school carefully considers the individual needs of all pupils. Academic, personal and social progress is monitored and assessed throughout the day and informs pupils' detailed reports. Parents appreciate the school/home comment book that provides for an important exchange of daily information. A small number of parents are concerned about their child's needs being fully met since the re-designation, but the school is consulting with parents to ensure that their views are taken seriously and action is seen to be taken. The school provides a positive learning environment in which pupils are kept safe and can mature. Arrangements for child protection are established and risk assessments are carried out effectively. When asked, one pupil said he felt safe in the school because he knows everyone and 'teachers are friendly'. Pupils receive good support and guidance and attend courses at the local college. They have well-planned opportunities to learn about the world at work which helps to develop their confidence and independence and prepares them for the challenges of what lies ahead after school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The school has come through a phase of instability in terms of leadership, since the re-designation, and the headteacher has effectively tackled the issues brought to his attention by the very knowledgeable governing body. He has helped to establish a clear vision for improvement and is ably supported by the acting deputy and senior leadership team who have a good understanding of how to ensure vision is put into practice. The headteacher has made effective use of external advice to support school development. All aspects of school self-evaluation and the importance of 'Every Child Matters' are clearly understood, and the views of the parents, pupils, governors and the community are carefully considered. Consequently, the school's views of itself are accurate, as are its prioritised areas for improvement, and evidence suggests there is a good capacity to further improve. A small number of parents are still concerned about behaviour and whether the needs of their child are being met. These concerns have been listened to and the school has put improvement strategies into place. Communication with parents is improving and there is a very informative weekly newsletter that goes home. However, the school could further improve its interactions with parents to ensure they are fully aware of school developments, the reasons for changes and evidence to show that they are being genuinely listened to. Monitoring procedures for improving the quality of education are in place and there is a clear view of where improvements need to happen. For example, in the consistent use of assessment to inform planning and ensuring that the curriculum is appropriately meeting the needs of all groups and ages of pupils. There is excellent practice which is yet to be effectively shared across the school. Performance management for staff is in place and the continued professional development of all staff is recognised as an important area for further development.

The school monitors, records and assesses pupils' progress and the data are carefully analysed to identify rates of progress across the different groups of pupils. Governance of the school is excellent. All statutory requirements are met and governors provide an effective level of challenge to ensure they fully understand what the school is all about. Governors ask very pertinent questions, such as, 'What impact has this meeting had on pupils' progress?'

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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	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	2
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	Yes
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	3

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

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

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	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	2
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	1
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	Yes

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	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Pupils

I really enjoyed my time in your school and I would like to thank you for making my visit such a happy one. It was a real pleasure to see you working in your lessons and enjoying your learning. I would like to have stayed for the leavers' presentation evening, but I did enjoy the lunchtime barbeque. I thought your school is good at supporting your learning needs and there were many things I particularly liked:

* You all receive a good education and are well cared for by all adults.* You enjoy coming to school, are happy in your lessons and make good progress towards your individual targets.* Your teachers and support staff work well together and ensure you enjoy your lessons do your best. Your effort and achievements in lessons are celebrated in school displays and in assemblies.* Although some of your parents are worried about bad behaviour in the school, it is getting better.* The governors of the school keep a close watch on how well the school is doing and how well you are achieving.* Your headteacher and all the staff listen carefully to you and are always thinking of what they can do to make the school even better.

Oh, I nearly forgot! I really liked the work being carried out in the school grounds, to make your break times so interesting; you are so lucky. Also, your art work is fabulous and really brightens up the school. There a few things the school can do to improve:* By making sure you consistently receive the very best teaching.* By making sure your parents/carers know how things are getting better.* By making sure you use computers more to support your learning.Once again, thank you for being so friendly and making my visit such a pleasant one.

Yours sincerely,

Mike Smith

Lead Inspector