



St George's, Bickley, Church of England Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 101645
Local Authority Bromley
Inspection number 286136
Inspection dates 23–24 January 2007
Reporting inspector Wendy Simmons

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Tylney Road
School category	Voluntary controlled		Bromley
Age range of pupils	4–11		BR1 2RL
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	020 8460 4266
Number on roll (school)	279	Fax number	020 8460 4266
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Rev Canon DAS Herbert
		Headteacher	Mrs Valerie Carrier
Date of previous school inspection	17 June 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

St George's educates a wide mix of pupils, although most are from White British backgrounds. Other large groups include pupils from Asian, Black African and Black Caribbean heritages. A higher than average proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language. Pupils come from wide ranging social circumstances but, overall, these are average. The school has a similar number of pupils with learning difficulties as most other schools. An unusually high number of pupils join and leave the school throughout the school year. The school has gained 'Healthy Schools,' 'Investors in People', and the 'Silver Arts Mark' awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

St George's is a satisfactory and improving school with good features in pupils' personal development. The headteacher, senior staff and governors set the tone by providing a calm and happy working ethos where pupils behave well and enjoy learning. Parents have confidence in the school and relationships are very good. Significant pressure has been placed on the school in the last few years due to an unusually high number of pupils joining and leaving the school throughout the school year and financial constraints. The school has managed this well with leaders correctly giving most attention to improving English and mathematics. Overall, standards are average by the end of Year 6. However, the school recognises that standards are not high enough in science. This is because too few pupils gain the higher levels in test results. Overall, there are missed opportunities to develop pupils' scientific learning by discussing and writing about the outcomes of their experiments.

Satisfactory leadership and management are resulting in improving achievement and standards. The headteacher has a clear vision and staff work as a supportive team. Leaders are beginning to make effective use of assessment and monitoring information to identify pupils who could be doing better. While the school is beginning to develop systems to track pupils' progress term by term, systems do not yet ensure that progress can be easily tracked from the Foundation Stage through to the end of Year 6. There are missed opportunities for staff to monitor and share best practice in teaching in the drive to lift the overall quality of teaching and learning from satisfactory to good.

In the last year, leaders have focused successfully on helping higher attaining pupils to do better. Since April 2006, the governors have been able to allocate more funds to increase staff, train assistants and give pupils with learning difficulties more suitable support. Teaching, learning and care, guidance, and support are satisfactory. Pastoral care is very good and learning opportunities are enriched by a good range of extra clubs and visits. When these features are combined they contribute to pupils' overall satisfactory achievement.

Since the last inspection, provision in the Foundation Stage has improved well. In 2002, there was no suitable outside learning area for young children. The accommodation has been altered to provide suitable inside and outside learning opportunities. The curriculum now meets the needs of young children and they achieve satisfactorily.

Pupils' good personal development and well being help them to learn good skills for their future lives when combined with their satisfactory overall academic achievement. Pupils adopt healthy and safe lifestyles and make an exemplary contribution to the community. Their outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development help them to respect others and cope with their feelings.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards and pupils' achievement in science.

- Make better use of assessment information to carefully track pupils' progress from the Foundation Stage through to Year 6.
- Raise the quality of teaching and learning from satisfactory to good by rigorously monitoring pupils' learning and sharing good teaching practice.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory and this leads to average standards by the end of Year 6. Children make steady progress in the Foundation Stage. By the beginning of Year 1 they have the skills expected for their age. In the past, there has been underachievement in Years 1 and 2 in reading and writing and satisfactory progress in mathematics. Strategic placement of staff together with better teaching and learning have halted the fall in standards and reflect satisfactory progress by the end of Year 2.

Pupils make steady progress between Years 3 and 6. Since 2005, pupils' achievement has improved. Standards in English have improved well. This is due to pupils doing more challenging reading and writing activities. Specialist teaching in English, especially for higher attaining pupils and those on the cusp of reaching average standards is positively helping pupils to make better progress. As a result, standards are above average in English. In mathematics, standards are average due to better problem solving activities and improved lesson organisation and planning. As a result, work is suitably matched to pupils' needs. To redress the low standards in science, the school has planned revision and catch-up classes but, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to consider and record their conclusions when doing investigation work in science.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils behave well, enjoy learning, concentrate well and show perseverance. Attendance is satisfactory and has improved since 2005. Pupils learn important life skills and commented especially on being made aware of how to deal with bullying. They understand why drugs are dangerous and are very well aware of what constitutes healthy eating. Pupils contribute outstandingly well to the community as evident in fund raising for charities, links with the church and when singing in the choir locally. Pupils enjoy taking responsibility and co-operate well with each other. For example, under the 'Education Business Partnership' initiative and with the help of a landscape gardener, pupils helped to design and build a special garden.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are outstanding. Pupils show tolerance, respect and empathy for those around them. One pupil summed up the views of others when saying, 'We understand racism and know that it is unkind.' Pupils like writing their own prayers at the 'Prayer Table' as this helps them to explore their

feelings and resolve their worries. High quality art activities contribute to pupils' development.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are now good in English. Lessons meet the needs of different ability groups satisfactorily and planning is much improved. Teaching assistants give good support and have benefited from training to develop their skills. As a result, this is helping to improve pupils' achievement. Teachers have satisfactory knowledge and skills when teaching mathematics and they provide suitable problem solving activities, which extend pupils' reasoning and use of basic calculation skills. Teachers are not always confident in how to develop science work and too often pupils' work is not finished, which means that they do not get the opportunity to develop more complex ideas by discussing and recording their conclusions to experiments. In addition, teachers do not get enough chance to share good practice in their drive to lift the quality of teaching and learning from satisfactory to good.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is well planned to promote good personal development and modified to meet the needs of most pupils. Information and communication technology (ICT) is planned well to enhance pupils' learning. A wide range of extra activities help pupils to develop hobbies, fitness and enjoyment of art and music. Parents and pupils value this. Pupils state that, 'Extra activities make learning fun,' and they agree that they enjoy learning Spanish in Years 5 and 6. The school is still developing science and is just beginning to plan links between subjects. The school is increasing opportunities for young children to engage in independent work well in the Foundation Stage, but sometimes a lack of resources hampers this.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pastoral care is very good and reflects the school's caring ethos. Robust child protection procedures are in place. Most parents confirm that this is a caring school but a few raised issues about bullying being addressed too slowly. The school takes parents' concerns seriously. As a consequence of this, the school has taken part in an anti-bullying programme with pupils and now ensures that bullies are dealt with quickly and effectively.

The guidance and support given to pupils with learning difficulties has improved in the last year. More time has been allocated to the management of this and as a consequence pupils make satisfactory progress. Strong links with outside agencies

enhance in school support for those with learning difficulties and clear plans are in place to introduce more group work activities.

Some pupils speak enthusiastically about their targets but others cannot remember them. The quality of guidance that teachers give pupils when marking their work and when discussing this with them in lessons is too inconsistent. Some marking of pupils' work is outstanding but overall it is inconsistent in giving pupils clear guidance on how to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher has developed very good relationships with pupils, parents and teachers and this has resulted in an effective and happy working ethos. Under her direction, much needed improvements have been made to buildings. Notably, the provision in the Foundation Stage has improved from inadequate, at the time of the last inspection, to satisfactory.

The school's evaluation of its performance is satisfactory. Managers are improving their skills in how to interpret performance data so as to help them to plan where improvements are needed. As a consequence, the achievement of higher attaining pupils has improved from inadequate to satisfactory in mathematics and from satisfactory to good in English. Better promotion of speaking skills and increased support for pupils learning English as an additional language are helping this group to make satisfactory progress. The school has a satisfactory capacity to improve.

The quality of teaching and learning are evaluated, with systems becoming better managed. However, the monitoring of English is more rigorous than in mathematics and science and this is an important factor in why pupils make more progress in English than in other subjects.

Governance is satisfactory. Governors give good support on finance and staffing issues but are less proactive in monitoring pupils' achievement. They contribute much to the whole school ethos and pupils' good personal development.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

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

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

You may remember that three inspectors came to your school recently to find out how good it is and how well you are doing. Thank you for being so friendly and telling us about your school. We are writing to let you know our findings.

St George's is a satisfactory school. This means that most things are suitable for you, some things are particularly good and a few aspects need to be better. You are all happy at school, enjoy learning and value the good range of extra activities. Relationships are very good with adults caring for you as individuals. You explore your feelings, respect others and contribute much to the wider community; this is outstanding! Well done for behaving well, performing at concerts and raising funds for so many charities. Your school has improved in the last year because your headteacher, staff and governors have been busy trying to make it better for you. As a result, many of you now reach the standards that we expect. You make steady progress because teaching and learning are satisfactory. We were pleased to see your good art work and interested to hear how you are trying to become fit and healthy. In particular, you do well in English because the school has improved reading and writing activities. Mathematics is also developing now that you are doing more problem solving work. We were pleased to hear that you enjoy science and know that most of you are doing more experiments but standards could be higher.

The inspectors have asked your headteacher and teachers to do these important things:

- Help you to make better progress and reach higher standards in science.
- Check your learning carefully and help teachers to share more of their best teaching work with each other.
- Keep a more watchful eye on how much progress you make from year to year.

Please help them with these things when you can, especially by finishing your science work and by talking about your scientific discoveries.

Yours sincerely

Wendy Simmons

Lead inspector