

St George's CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131038
Local Authority	Bolton
Inspection number	293694
Inspection dates	14–15 March 2007
Reporting inspector	Margaret Lewis

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	272
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev R Jackson
Headteacher	Mr Simon Bramwell
Date of previous school inspection	14 January 2002
School address	The Hoskers Westhoughton Bolton Lancashire BL5 2FB
Telephone number	01942 813069
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

St George's is a popular and over subscribed school situated in Westhoughton, close to Bolton. Most pupils come from a favourable socio-economic background and a much lower than average proportion of pupils is entitled to a free school meal. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below the national average. Almost all pupils use English as their first language and the majority come from a White British background. The school holds a Silver Arts Mark Award and an Investors in People award. It is accredited as a leading school in information and communication technology (ICT) and holds candidate status for the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme.

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 a good school with some outstanding features. It provides good value for money. It is a welcoming, bright and attractive school where pupils take great pleasure in learning and show a high level of enthusiasm for the many excellent opportunities they are given. Behaviour is exemplary. Pupils grow into mature, well mannered and articulate individuals.

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Good, very good and some excellent teaching is a secure feature of the school so that all pupils achieve well. Teachers keep a very close eye on pupils' progress, but the systems in place to assess pupils' work need refining so that individuals are more aware of what they need to do to improve.

Provision in the Foundation Stage is good. Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1 and standards at the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics are consistently high. In the past three years there has been significant staff turnover, which initially impacted adversely on pupils' attainment and progress in Key Stage 2. Results in the 2006 national tests were in line with national averages in English, mathematics and science and are now rising. This upturn in standards in Key Stage 2 is due to the strong and very effective leadership and management of the headteacher and the newly created senior management team. This has resulted in previous underachievement being clearly identified and successfully tackled. For instance, although the quality of pupils' writing and problem solving in mathematics is improving, the school recognises that there is still more work to be done and continues to address this. An overwhelming majority of parents speak very highly of the school and how it cares and provides for their children. The school has an outstanding curriculum and provides excellent enrichment opportunities both in its extra-curricular provision and as part of the Primary Years Programme. The curriculum together with the strong Christian ethos evident in the school contributes exceedingly well to pupils' outstanding personal development.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the quality of pupils' writing and of their problem solving in mathematics rises to the same level as the rest of their achievements in English and mathematics.
- Improve the use of assessment so that pupils know and understand how to improve their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children start in the Nursery with broadly average skills. They do well and make good progress in the Foundation Stage and enter Year 1 with above average attainment for their age. They continue to make good progress in Key Stage 1 so that by the time they leave Year 2 they reach standards in reading, writing and mathematics that are significantly above the national average. In 2006, results at the end of Year 6 in national tests were in line with national averages for English, mathematics and science. This represents an improvement from a significant drop in overall standards in 2004 and 2005. The drop in results was followed by a lack of continuity in staffing which hampered improvement. More stable staffing from September 2005 has remedied this. Standards are continuing to improve in Key Stage 2 due to effective strategies put into place by the leadership team and the emphasis on improving teaching and learning and encouraging professional development. As a result all pupils from Years 3 to 6 achieve well and make good progress. In 2006 pupils did not do as well as expected in mathematics and school

targets were missed. However, during this academic year standards in mathematics have risen considerably. There is compelling evidence that shows that pupils in the current Years 5 and 6 are doing well and are on line to reach the challenging targets the school has set in English and mathematics for 2007.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. They make excellent progress in the development of personal skills. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. This is particularly evident in the way that pupils relate to each other and to all adults in the school. Pupils know this and say proudly that, 'the teachers trust us'. The oldest pupils show a high level of maturity in their attitudes and all pupils extend courtesy and friendliness to visitors. The youngest pupils are very well looked after by older ones and feel confident that they could turn to them with a problem.

Attendance is good and is a clear sign of how much pupils enjoy school. Pupils' behaviour and attention in lessons is excellent. Pupils are very well aware of healthy lifestyles, recognising the benefits of eating wholesome foods and participating in a variety of physical activities. Through the work of the school council and in responding to questionnaires, pupils are fully involved in making decisions about their learning and the school environment. They contribute sensitively to the well-being of others. This is seen in their willingness to help others in school and in their support for a range of charities. Pupils are confident and outgoing with high levels of speaking and listening skills that prepare them well for the future. They relate to the needs of others less fortunate whilst empathising with and understanding other cultures.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is never less than good and there is some outstanding practice. Lessons are planned carefully and teachers make good use of a wide range of good quality resources. Oral parts of lessons are noticeably good. Teachers make good use of ICT to support lessons and make them interesting. Pupils say, 'It's fun to learn and teachers are fun too!' Consequently, they listen well and are keen to answer questions. They are encouraged to think and express their understanding because teachers pose questions that require them to do so. Teachers have good expertise and a secure knowledge of the curriculum. Tasks are challenging and matched well to the pupils' ability. High quality teaching assistants are very supportive of pupils' learning. This means that all pupils, including those who need close guidance, are fully involved in lessons and make similar progress to others. Although teachers know how well their pupils are achieving, as a result of their careful assessment, that knowledge is not always used well enough to set specific targets for pupils' next steps in learning. When they mark work not all teachers in Years 3 to 6 provide enough guidance to pupils about how to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The excellent curriculum is vibrant, varied and extremely well matched to the needs of all pupils including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those with special talents. A

considerable strength of the curriculum is the innovative way in which teachers plan links between subjects to make learning meaningful and exciting for the pupils. This was seen exceptionally well in one of the 'Super Learning Days' which really fired pupils' imagination and enthusiasm for learning in science. These days give them a great opportunity to work across age groups, sharing their talents and knowledge. Pupils' creativity is developed through the biannual Arts Week and through opportunities for all pupils to learn to play a musical instrument. ICT is used very well by teachers and pupils to support learning across the curriculum. French is a feature of the curriculum throughout the school and contributes to pupils' very good cultural development. Pupils' work is attractively displayed creating an environment where all can celebrate each other's successes. The wide range of extra-curricular activities, visits and visitors extend pupils' learning experiences and discover new skills and talents.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care, guidance and support provided for pupils are good. The partnership of teachers, support staff, administrative staff and outside agencies works exceptionally well together and ensures that pupils' care and well being is of prime importance. Pupils place great faith in their teachers and others who support them. Adults encourage children to be independent as well as being capable of sharing well with others. Pupils with learning difficulties and other disabilities are fully included in all aspects of school life. Arrangements for child protection and health and safety are in place. Targets to help individual pupils progress are not consistently set by teachers and known by pupils. Teachers use effective assessment procedures to track pupils' progress through the school enabling well focused support for those who need a boost to help them to improve. However, there is currently no record of pupils identified as having specific gifts or talents although the school makes good provision for them within its innovative curriculum. Care is taken to ensure that pupils move to their next class without undue concerns and those in Year 6 are prepared well to move to secondary school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has recently built a very successful senior team and has created exceptionally good conditions for learning in which pupils thrive and achieve well. Strong leadership is moving the school forward very successfully in many areas. All leaders are intent on raising standards. Accurate school self-evaluation, which takes account of pupils' and parents' views, enables the school to plan effectively for improvement. Inspectors agree with almost all of the judgements the school has made of itself, although it has been cautious in its judgement of the curriculum.

The Primary Years Programme introduced as part of the International Baccalaureate and led by a recently appointed dynamic and enthusiastic deputy headteacher and the high level of ICT capability are extremely successful in enhancing pupils' learning. At the heart of the school's work is the successful promotion of equality of opportunity and of enjoyment in learning. The headteacher is particularly skilled in developing very positive links with the parents and the local community. These links provide valuable support for pupils and enrich their learning.

Governance and financial management is good. Governors carry out their responsibilities with commitment and work closely with senior managers to improve the quality of education provided.

There is strong team work and the well focused staff training contributes well to continuing improvements in teaching and in the curriculum. The commitment to improvement also underpins teaching, learning, the curriculum and the very successful promotion of pupils' personal development and well- being. The school has dealt effectively with the points raised in the previous inspection and has good capacity to improve.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you very much for making the inspectors so welcome during the inspection. We really enjoyed talking to you and finding out the things that you like most and seeing your work. I am delighted to tell you that you have a good school that is outstanding in some respects.

The things that are particularly good are:

- the way that you enjoy coming to school and are so enthusiastic. You smile such a lot of the time that we know you are happy and enjoy your work
- the good teaching which is sometimes excellent and the way you work hard in lessons
- your excellent behaviour towards each other and your teachers and the other adults who help you
- the excellent opportunities the teachers give you in lessons and on days such as the science 'Super Learning Day'. Wasn't it a great day? You all learned such a lot and we really enjoyed the healthy food at lunchtime that you know so much about.

We would like to tell you what we have asked your teachers to do to make school even better.

- We would like the teachers of the pupils in Key Stage 2 to make sure that you get even better in writing and mathematics. We have also asked that your teachers comment on your work in more detail. This will help you to know exactly how well you are doing and what you need to do to reach even higher standards in your work.

Keep up your very good attitudes to learning and continue to work hard and enjoy school.