

Tyldesley St George's Central CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131331
Local Authority	Wigan
Inspection number	293739
Inspection dates	27–28 March 2007
Reporting inspector	Lesley Traves

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	285
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr F Pearson
Headteacher	Mrs G Fisher
Date of previous school inspection	11 November 2002
School address	Darlington Street Tyldesley Manchester Lancashire M29 8DH
Telephone number	01942 883773
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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 Central is a larger than average primary school which draws its pupils from a range of socially and economically diverse backgrounds, including some areas of social need. All but a few pupils are of White British heritage. A very small number are in the care of the local authority. An above average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with statements. The proportion of pupils having free school meals is broadly average. Pupil numbers fluctuate from year to year, so that class organisation changes and some pupils are taught in mixed-age classes. The school has achieved the Investors in People Award, the Healthy Schools Award, the Eco Schools Award, the Leading Aspects Award, the Playground Development Award and the Raising Standards in Sports and PE Award. The headteacher is currently absent as a result of illness.

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 school. It provides a high level of care for all pupils and outstanding support for their social and emotional development. As a result, pupils' personal development is good and they flourish in the caring, family atmosphere. They develop into mature, thoughtful young people, who have good levels of self-esteem and care for others. The school's very effective programmes for personal, social and emotional development and its commitment to Christian values underpin pupils' personal development particularly well. The school successfully strives to include all pupils in its work and to meet individual needs, as reflected in the particularly good progress made by pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. In order to achieve the best for these pupils, school leaders make very good use of the expertise from outside the school and ensure that support staff are highly trained to fulfil their roles effectively. Parents greatly value the work of the school. They are particularly pleased with how it supports them in helping their children to learn and listens to their views. The words of one parent sum up the views of others, 'I am happy and privileged to have my children at this school. Staff really care about the children's education and their happiness.' Pupils enjoy school and this is demonstrated in their positive attitudes. They love the wide range of activities provided for them and the very well equipped outdoor play area. These features add to their learning and social development. A sense of responsibility is encouraged and pupils enjoy looking after others as 'buddies' and helping in the wider community. Pupils learn the benefits of living a healthy lifestyle through the many sporting activities and work towards the 'Healthy Schools Award'. They behave exceptionally well around the school and in many lessons, because of their mature understanding of what is the right thing to do. However, in a very small number of lessons, pupils do not behave quite so well because they are not managed as effectively as they could be.

Pupils achieve well from their starting points to reach at least average standards by the time they leave in Year 6. This is in response to good teaching. They get off to a strong start in the Foundation Stage. Staff here are working hard to develop greater opportunities for speaking and listening and are providing increasingly exciting role play activities. Pupils make good progress through Key Stages 1 and 2. Most teachers have high expectations of pupils, plan work thoroughly to meet their needs and support them well in understanding what they are to learn. In Reception and Key Stage 1, the basic skills of reading are particularly well taught. Progress in writing is accelerating throughout the school because staff are making very good use of training they have received. Year 6 pupils are particularly proud that they have had some poems published recently. There is a small percentage of less effective teaching that the school is working hard to eradicate. Weaker lessons are not so well planned and do not always engage and challenge all pupils as well as they could. Consequently, some pupils become restless and inattentive and progress slows as a result. The curriculum is good and meets the needs of pupils well: their work is displayed beautifully around school. The enrichment of learning through a very wide range of clubs, visits and visitors is an outstanding feature.

The school is well led and managed. A significant strength is the way in which the headteacher and deputy headteacher work together as a team to drive improvements and manage the school from day to day. Consequently, during the headteacher's recent absence, the deputy headteacher has seamlessly taken on the role and kept the school on an even keel. School leaders and governors have a thorough understanding of the school's context and the needs and aspirations of the community it serves. As a result, they maintain a strong commitment to supporting

pupils' personal development and enriching their experiences, whilst working successfully to raise standards. All subject coordinators are involved in evaluating work in their areas. However, some are more proactive in bringing about improvements than others. Governance is good and gives a strong financial steer. Consequently, the school provides good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Iron out inconsistencies in teaching in order to improve progress and raise standards.
- Ensure that the work of all subject coordinators has an equally good impact on school improvement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well and meet challenging targets. They make good progress from their starting points to reach average and occasionally above average standards by the end of Year 6. Children enter the Nursery with skills that are below those usual for their age, particularly in communication, language and literacy. They make good progress through the Foundation Stage, with the best achievement in the Nursery. Personal, social and emotional development is a particularly strong feature. By the time they enter Year 1 the majority have reached the expected standard, although communication is still a weaker area. Pupils continue to make good progress through Key Stages 1 and 2. The best achievement is seen where teaching is strongest. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make particularly good progress as a result of an impressive support programme and skilled help from teaching assistants. In 2006, pupils' performance in national tests for 11 year olds was slightly above average, with English a little stronger than mathematics and science. There has been a rising trend of improvement for three years at Key Stage 2, particularly in English. The school took steps to improve writing and this is now showing in improved results. The pupils themselves talk about how they now have 'the stamina' to write more extensively.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. The school successfully builds pupils' confidence, self-esteem and good attitudes to learning. Consequently, behaviour is good and sometimes outstanding and pupils' manners are exemplary. Pupils enjoy their lessons, throwing themselves enthusiastically into activities: only very occasionally do a few lose interest and not work so hard. They are also full of enthusiasm for activities such as the sport clubs and choir, which add greatly to their experience and expand opportunities for social development. Attendance is satisfactory and the school is striving effectively to bring about further improvements. Pupils are proud of the way they contribute to school life. They are delighted with the way the school council has enabled them to play their part in establishing developments such as the new library. They are pleased that their 'worry box' and 'friendship stop' offer a route to help fellow pupils who may have concerns. Pupils feel safe and are confident that if any bullying occurs it will be dealt with promptly and effectively. Pupils are fully aware of health issues, as a result of work undertaken towards the 'Healthy Schools Award'. They are able to make sensible food choices rather than choosing those foods which may be popular but have less nutritional value.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Some examples of outstanding teaching were seen at Key Stages 1 and 2. However, there were also occasions where teaching was less effective. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities learn particularly well because of the high quality, focused support they receive. The good teaching is characterised by thorough planning and work that is set at the right level for pupils of all abilities, to enable them to achieve well. There are particular strengths in the planning for pupils in most of the mixed-age classes. Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and work-rate. As a result, pupils concentrate hard and behave well, so that learning progresses at a good rate. Their well-developed social skills enable them to cooperate and work sensibly with each other, which adds much to their learning. Lessons are well organised: teachers are good at explaining exactly what it is they want pupils to learn and questioning them to make sure they have understood. This ensures that pupils are well-focused, misunderstandings are dealt with promptly and no time is lost. The best lessons are carried out at a cracking pace, stretching pupils to the limit. Pupils' enjoyment is tangible, as they are required to think hard and solve increasingly complex problems. Weaker lessons fail to engage and challenge all pupils effectively. Consequently, pupils lose concentration, their attention wanders and they become restless. Occasionally, the behaviour of a few pupils slips. This affects their rate of progress. Teachers generally make good use of information about pupils' progress to set challenging targets for them. However, some teachers do not always use marking as well as they could to indicate to pupils how they might improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is well planned to ensure that requirements are met and pupils build effectively on their skills from year to year. A strong feature is the way that the school plans for the mixed-age classes. This ensures that pupils do not 'mark time' or revisit aspects of learning unnecessarily. A strong emphasis on teaching the basic skills of literacy and the very effective personal, social, health and citizenship education programme ensure that pupils are well prepared for future life. The school has started to develop links between subjects to ensure that pupils make connections between different strands of learning and use skills developed in one subject more widely in others, although this work is at an early stage. Well organised and effective provision for those pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities enables them to be fully included in all that school has to offer. Learning is greatly enriched through an excellent range of clubs, visitors to school and educational visits. The school makes very good use of work towards nationally recognised awards, such as 'Eco Schools' and of links with the community and other local schools. In the Foundation Stage the curriculum is based effectively on learning through play and discovery. Staff are working hard to ensure that children have access to the same exciting learning experiences outdoors as they do in the classroom.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care and pastoral support for pupils is outstanding. Pupils are very secure in the knowledge that staff are there to listen and help them if problems arise. Parents are very confident that

their children are well looked after and they value the support the school provides for families. Support for pupils' emotional development is exceptionally strong and underpins pupils' mature and sensible attitudes to school life. This has been effectively supported by the nurture groups in both Key Stages 1 and 2. The learning mentors play a key role in this and parents speak warmly of the impact their work has had, for example, on improving behaviour. School leaders are good at identifying and removing barriers to learning. As a result, the needs of those children who are vulnerable and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are fully met. Academic progress is tracked thoroughly, particularly in English and mathematics, so that appropriate targets are set for each child and the right level of support or challenge provided. The school keeps parents informed about their children's targets and the progress they make. Pupils know their targets. However, there is not yet a consistent picture across the school of teachers involving them in evaluating their own learning. The school recognises this and has it as a priority for future development. Appropriate procedures are in place to ensure health and safety, child protection and safe recruitment of staff.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have a clear, shared vision for the school and are relentless in their pursuit of the best for their pupils. Although they have a strong commitment to providing high quality pastoral support for pupils, this does not diminish their focus on raising standards. As a result standards are significantly higher than at the time of the last inspection and achievement for all pupils is much better. School leaders have worked hard to achieve this through improving the quality of teaching and learning. There has been a strong focus from the headteacher and deputy headteacher on building on staff strengths, whilst challenging and supporting any weaknesses. Recent improvements in the teaching of writing exemplify this process. The school has achieved the Investors in People Award in recognition of its commitment to staff development. These factors indicate good capacity for further improvement. However, despite the successes, the headteacher, deputy headteacher and governors recognise that there is more to be done, through the involvement of subject coordinators, to achieve consistently good and better teaching in all lessons. Some subject leaders are doing a good job in developing their areas of responsibility. In English, for example, the coordinators' work has had a positive impact on raising standards. However, although all coordinators are involved, for example, in examining teachers' planning and analysing data, the impact of the work of some on school improvement is harder to identify. Procedures for evaluating the work of the school are thorough and rigorous. Consequently, the school has a sharp view of what it does well and what needs to be improved, based on good evidence. School leaders draw well on the views of governors, pupils and parents in determining its priorities. Their judgement of the school's performance is honest and largely accurate, although somewhat conservative at times. Governors fulfil their responsibilities and use their individual expertise well. They are supportive, act as 'critical friends' and are not afraid to take difficult decisions. They have been actively involved in stabilising a precarious budget position through good management.

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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?	2
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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
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	2
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?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
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	3
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**

You may remember that three inspectors visited your school recently to find out about how well you are doing with your work and all the other activities you take part in. Thank you for being so polite, welcoming and friendly. We really enjoyed talking to you and listening to what you had to say about your school and what you like best about it. I especially enjoyed reading the beautiful poems Year 6 had written and which had been published. It was great to meet some real authors!

The things that we think are really good about your school are:

- the way in which teachers enable you to do well in your lessons
- your very good behaviour and excellent manners
- the way in which all the people in school care for you very much and help you in all you do
- the way in which you care for others and are so sensible in all you do
- your super playground. I wish I could have had a go on the tyres!

We have asked your teachers to do some things to make the school even better.

- We have asked your headteacher, deputy headteacher and governors to make sure that every one of your lessons is well planned and interesting for you.
- We have also asked them to help all of the teachers who take responsibility for subjects to make sure you do as well as you possibly can.

You can play your part by making sure that you continue to try your hardest at all times, because at St George's Central you, 'Never settle for less than your best!' Thank you very much for helping us with the inspection. We hope that you will carry on enjoying school and doing well.