



# St George's Catholic Primary School, Warminster

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 126481  
**Local Authority** Wiltshire  
**Inspection number** 294643  
**Inspection dates** 18–19 October 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Patricia Davies

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Woodcock Road
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided		Warminster
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11		BA12 9EZ
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01985 218284
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	151	<b>Fax number</b>	01985 212797
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Michael Walsh
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Molly Johnston
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	14 October 2005		

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

St George's is situated on the outskirts of Warminster and takes pupils from a wide area. About 18% come from a military services background and a fairly high proportion of pupils move into and out of the school during their primary education. Attainment on entry to the Reception class is broadly average, but varies widely. The school is smaller than average and, in keeping with a general local trend, numbers have fallen over recent years. The school has reorganised this year to accommodate the reduction and some classes contain pupils from more than one age group. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities has risen, but is still below average. Most pupils are from White British families and others are from a mix of minority ethnic backgrounds. A very few pupils are learning to speak English as an additional language.

During the last two years the school has had difficulties recruiting a permanent headteacher. It was identified as in need of significant improvement at the time of its last inspection and was given a Notice to Improve. A new permanent headteacher joined the school this September.

## 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 school has made significant progress since the last inspection and its overall effectiveness is now satisfactory. In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement. The new headteacher is successfully building on the hard work and innovations of the last academic year. Pupils and members of staff recognise a real and positive difference and teamwork is strong. Care, guidance and support are satisfactory and, during an uncertain period, the school has continued to provide strong pastoral care. As a result, pupils' good personal development and well-being have been sustained and attendance is above average. The promotion of good eating habits and extensive opportunities for sport are outstanding aspects of the school's satisfactory curriculum and such that pupils show considerable understanding of how to keep fit and healthy.

Pupils' academic achievement is now satisfactory. Indeed, in response to good and outstanding teaching, pupils in Years 5 and 6 make good progress. As a result, standards have risen to above-average levels by the time they move on to secondary education. Nevertheless, the school has been more successful in raising achievement in English than it has in mathematics. Having turned its attention to providing more practical and investigative mathematical activities, progress in mathematics is increasing. Well-planned activities have maintained good progress in the Reception class. Standards in the current group of Reception-aged children, early in the school year, are broadly as expected.

Some key factors have contributed to the school's greater academic effectiveness. First and foremost, the school now has challenging expectations of pupils' progress and a simple and effective means of checking how well pupils are doing. The school, therefore, has a valuable source of information that it knows must now be marshalled and interrogated in more detail. Much recent attention has also been given to planning lesson activities for mixed-age classes. Therefore, work is generally matched well to the needs of all. Nevertheless, these initiatives have not yet had enough time for pupils to fully reap the benefits of improvement. Teaching and learning, although satisfactory and much improved, still vary too much in quality for progress to be consistently good. Leadership and management are now satisfactory in all important aspects. Subject leadership has improved, most particularly in relation to English and information and communication technology (ICT).

### What the school should do to improve further

- Increase pupils' mathematical skill and achievement, particularly in problem-solving activities.
- Ensure that teaching and learning are consistently good or better in all areas of the school, particularly across Years 1 to 4.
- Compile and interrogate assessment information from each class in order to gain a clear and detailed knowledge of pupils' progress and attainment.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

Substantial effort has been given to eradicating past underachievement and securing the school's present satisfactory achievement. Above-average standards at Year 6 illustrate the school's success. In some cases progress has been rapid, but good progress is not yet consistent. For example, developments have been slower to materialise in Years 1 and 2 and, as a consequence, national test results at Year 2 have fallen. Nevertheless, standards in the present Year 2 are broadly average, having been a relatively lower-attaining group when they joined the school.

Children start off well in the Reception class. Last year's group, for example, reached higher-than-expected standards by the time they entered Year 1. Progress then slows to satisfactory during Years 1 to 4, but picks up again in Years 5 and 6 because these pupils are particularly well taught. The impact is powerfully illustrated in last term's national test results for Year 6 pupils. These rose from broadly average results in former years to above-average levels in English and science. The school was relatively less successful in mathematics and is, therefore, focusing its attention on improving this subject. The greater emphasis on enabling pupils to apply their mathematical knowledge is already lifting achievement. The effectiveness of this strategy is most evident in the current Year 6, where standards are similarly above average in English and mathematics.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

Pupils have no problems identifying why they enjoy school life. One parent wrote of their child's enthusiasm for school: 'She can't wait to go and hates having time off, which speaks volumes!' Such positive attitudes are reflected in pupils' good attendance and in the high take-up of school clubs. Pupils commented on how much they enjoy the mixed-age classes because these arrangements give them the opportunity to get to know children younger and older than themselves. This view captures the friendliness and care of pupils towards one another, and is just one illustration of their well-developed spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. Good behaviour falters only sometimes in the playground, when some pupils are overly boisterous.

Pupils readily take on and show responsibility. Younger pupils commented on how much safer they feel for the support of older pupils at lunch time. The introduction of the school council has given pupils a powerful 'voice' in school affairs. For example, suggestions for changes to the school uniform are to be taken forward to the governing body and pupils intend to canvass parental opinion. Experiences of this kind develop important social and personal skills for the future, although pupils are not as well grounded in the application and use of basic numeracy skills in preparation for adult working life.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are much improved, but still too variable in quality. Pupils' interest and concentration are often gained quickly because activities are linked with first-hand experience or enlivened by practical activities. Improvements to assessment and planning mean that work is largely matched to the needs of individual pupils, whatever their ability. Nevertheless, activities are much more demanding of pupils in Years 5 and 6 than they are in Years 1 to 4. In response to searching questioning and high-quality debate, for example, pupils in Year 6 produce mature ideas and exceptionally industrious work. Pupils' thinking is not always explored and extended in this way across Years 1 to 4, which limits progress in these classes to no more than satisfactory.

Written comments are now just starting to point out to pupils how to improve their work. In one or two classes, pupils also have the chance to comment on their work and the work of their classmates, but this approach is not yet a common feature.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

The school has taken steps to identify where its weaknesses lie within particular subjects and has used this information to adjust its planning. Nevertheless, these initiatives are too new to have established consistently good achievement. Improvements to English are further ahead than those for mathematics, although recent changes to the mathematics curriculum are proving successful. The curriculum has also been adapted to the demands of teaching mixed-age groups across Years 1 to 4. This new approach has proved challenging, but staff members are growing in confidence and planning is improving.

On the other hand, some aspects of the curriculum are already particularly effective. From African drumming and French to visits to organic farms and report writing with the local police, there are many 'additional' experiences for pupils to enjoy and learn. Close links with local secondary schools enable pupils to benefit from specialist teaching of physical education, design and technology and ICT. Pupils were quick to point to the benefits of the many sporting activities and to how much they enjoyed using the school's new ICT facilities. Activities in the Reception class are varied and well planned. The school's considerable emphasis on healthy eating starts here during 'snack time' and is reflected in recent training of the school's catering staff. As a result, pupils chat with considerable authority about the best foods to eat at lunch time.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 3

The school's strength in its pastoral care is not yet fully matched in the quality of its academic guidance and support. Pastoral care is good and much influenced by the school's Catholic foundation. One parent wrote appreciatively of the school's 'nurturing environment', while another praised the dedication of staff. This level of care is reflected in the considerable support for pupils who are looked after by the local authority.

At the same time, these attributes provide an important role model for pupils, who are successfully encouraged to care for each other as 'buddies' and lunch-time monitors. Procedures for ensuring pupils' safety are secure and the school was quick to address safety issues in the playground. It is, therefore, no surprise that pupils exercise sensible precautions to keep themselves safe when they work outside the classroom.

There have been important improvements to assessment. For example, pupils now have individual learning targets. Nevertheless, the school knows that new systems need more refinement. A simple, straightforward approach has been established for checking pupils' progress and identifying any who fall behind, but this information is not used as fully as it should be to help pupils do even better than they do now.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

Over the last year the school has tackled its weaknesses with increasing success. This work has given the school a much clearer picture of its effectiveness and it is, therefore, better placed to know what it must do to become fully effective. The momentum of improvement has continued this term under the clear and determined direction of the new headteacher. Members of staff recognise the benefits of the changes to how they work and they are pulling together as a team to apply improvements consistently. The school is well aware that some important initiatives have not had time to bed in and fully resolve the variability in teaching and academic achievement. It knows, for example, that information about pupils' progress in each class has not been collated or examined in enough depth to provide a detailed picture of pupils' performance.

The school has a satisfactory capacity to improve. It is not better than this because only one or two subject leaders are closely involved in finding out how their subject might be taught better. Subject leaders for English and ICT, for instance, have an influential role in evaluating and supporting teaching and learning, but the leadership of mathematics is not as well developed. Governors understand that they must look more closely at the school's work and have already extended their means for achieving this.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	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	2
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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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	3

### The quality of provision

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

<sup>1</sup> 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

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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**

Thank you very much for welcoming us to your school. We enjoyed our visit. Some of you spoke to us about your work and what you think about your school and that was very helpful. One of the important things you told us was how much you liked the improvements that have been made and how they are helping you to do better. We agree with you. Your school is now satisfactory, and all the adults at school are keen to make sure that it gets even better.

Here are some other important things about you and your school:

- Your progress now is at least satisfactory and those of you in the Reception class and in Years 5 and 6 are doing well.
- You find lessons interesting because they are often linked with visits out of school, for example, or have practical things to do.
- Many of you take part in the school's clubs, enjoy the many sporting activities and show a really good understanding of how to keep fit and eat healthily.
- You behave well, although some of you need to be a bit more careful when you are running in the playground.
- All the adults at school care for you well and you look after one another too.
- You are very pleased with the chance to say what you think about the school and make suggestions, such as allowing the girls to wear trousers as part of the school's uniform.

What the school needs to do to make it even better than it is now:

- Help you to do much better in mathematics, especially when you have mathematical problems to solve.
- Make sure that teaching is good or better in every lesson.
- Look very closely at the information about how well you are doing so that you can be helped to do even better.

Wishing you all the very best for the future.