

St George's CofE Primary School (VA)

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112889
Local Authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	311041
Inspection dates	18–19 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Lynne Blakelock

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	111
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	20
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr D Wellens
Headteacher	Mr P Thomas
Date of previous school inspection	21 June 2004
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Church Lane High Peak Derbyshire SK22 4NP

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	18–19 November 2008
Inspection number	311041

Telephone number

01663 743222

Fax number

01663 744512

Age group 3–11

Inspection dates 18–19 November 2008

Inspection number 311041

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This small school serves pupils living in the east of the town. The number on roll continues to fall, reflecting the demographic trend. A well above average percentage of pupils is eligible for free school meals in an area that is relatively disadvantaged, socially and economically. The vast majority of pupils are White British. Children start school with levels of knowledge and skills that are generally below those expected for their age. Although very few pupils have a statement of special educational needs, an above average proportion has learning difficulties and/or disabilities. A Nursery and Reception class provides for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), which they enter in either the September or January following their third birthday.

The school was awarded Investors in People status in 2006. In the same year it achieved the National Healthy Schools standard and was awarded the Basic Skills Quality Mark for the second time. The school's Anti-Bullying Award of Excellence was renewed in 2008. The school achieved Artsmark Silver and Activemark in 2008.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory quality of education for its pupils, who make sound progress as they move through the school. The effective initiatives to raise standards are accelerating progress and enabling sustained improvements. This demonstrates good leadership and management, which has monitored and evaluated the school's performance carefully in order to move the school forward. Progress since the last inspection has been sound and the school has a good capacity for further improvement. This is because detailed planning for the future by leaders, working with a strong governing body, has been based on a clear and accurate understanding of the areas where further improvement is needed.

Pupils' standards by the end of Year 2 are below average but rising. National test results at the end of Year 6 show that standards are below average in English, mathematics and science. Pupils perform less well in writing. Writing standards pulled English results down in 2008, particularly for boys, and the more able pupils in Key Stage 2 did not reach their targets in 2008 in literacy. Daily phonics lessons, which focus on letters and sounds, in the EYFS and in Key Stage 1 are helping improve writing standards. They help children to develop their emergent skills more quickly and thus lay solid foundations for improved writing standards through the school. Pupils enjoy learning because they have positive relationships with staff. They respond particularly well to those lessons where they can find things out for themselves. The increasing use of themes to promote literacy, numeracy and mathematics and a wide range of out of lesson activities are examples of the good curriculum, which encourages learning.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory through the school. Progress is sometimes slower than it could be because there is not regularly an accurate level of challenge in pupils' work, including that for more able pupils. In the EYFS, where tasks match children's needs more accurately, children make good progress. Pupils' academic support and guidance are satisfactory and have improved since the last inspection, with better tracking of the levels at which pupils are working. Marking, whilst encouraging, often does not tell pupils what they have achieved or how to make further progress. Targets are not regularly a clear enough focus in lessons to quicken pupils' progress.

Pupils' happiness, good behaviour and involvement in school life reflect their enjoyment of learning and their good personal development. The Christian ethos is central to the school's work and pupils demonstrate this in the support and consideration that they show for each other. It is reinforced by regular opportunities for pupils to take responsibility and develop sound skills to prepare them for their future economic well-being. Pupils also understand the importance of eating healthily and keeping fit and safe. Good pastoral care, guidance and support are provided by the school through careful procedures to keep pupils safe and secure. It adds to their security in school and their confidence. Pupils' cultural development is also good because the school encourages respect for the diversity of our world, backed up by regular curriculum based activities.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enter the Nursery with knowledge and skills that are variable, but which are below those expected, particularly in speaking and listening and in social skills. They settle down quickly into school because plans for their arrival have been carefully thought out. The school

establishes constructive links with parents, which develop further as children move through the school. Children feel secure because they know exactly what staff expect of them in this caring, safe and friendly environment and they respond positively. They are learning the importance of helping and sharing, which contribute to their good personal development and reinforce the Christian ethos of the school. Activities promote all aspects of learning and development, with a good balance of taught activities and learning through play, both indoors and outdoors. Children show joy in the many discoveries that they make through learning. They are encouraged to be independent and to take responsibility for their work and play, which makes them proud. Teaching and learning are good. Details of children's work and progress are recorded regularly and this information is used to guide teachers' planning. The EYFS is led and managed well. Teaching assistants provide effective support. By the end of the EYFS, most children have made good progress. The standards that they achieve are below average, with standards in writing better than in reading. Phonics, which is timetabled daily in ability groups, is quickening progress in children's reading.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards, especially in writing and for the more able, by making sure that all pupils have tasks that challenge them to do their best.
- Improve the quality of marking and the use of targets so that pupils have a clear understanding of the next steps in learning.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged to be satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils of all abilities make satisfactory progress as they move through the school. The results that they attain in national assessments by the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics are below average but improving year on year. Pupils' writing skills, in particular, are improving, with phonics lessons helping to raise results closer to the national average. Standards in tests at the end of Year 6 are below average. More able pupils in Key Stage 2 did not reach their targets in 2008 in literacy.

Because of these results, support groups have been set up in each year to help improve standards in writing. Such groups reflect the improving effectiveness of the school's tracking systems in identifying under-achievement. Because of the better understanding that these systems give, the school is now able to set aspirational, but realistic, targets that are increasingly being met. Those pupils who find learning hard make satisfactory progress due to appropriate support, backed up by individual education plans.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy the varied opportunities the school provides for them to develop as learners and young citizens. Their good behaviour and positive attitudes to all that the school offers reflect the school's Christian ethos, which shines through the school day. Attendance is average, with the school working with parents to discourage all but essential absences. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Despite few other cultures and faiths being represented

in the school, the curriculum ensures that pupils know and respect the beliefs and lifestyles of people from other backgrounds. Pupils have a good understanding of how to live healthily, with lessons educating them how to eat nutritiously and how to keep safe and fit. Pupils get on well with each other and look out for younger pupils. They understand the importance of treating people fairly. They show this in school and in the community because they have numerous chances to develop teamwork and leadership skills through daily responsibilities and special events. Older pupils relish chances to act as reading buddies to younger pupils and to be 'playground pals'. Such opportunities result in a satisfactory level of knowledge and skills for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and hence pupils make sound progress as they move through the school. There are common strengths, including teachers' good management of lessons and positive relationships between staff and pupils, which result in a happy learning environment. This is strengthened by vibrant displays of pupils' learning in classrooms and around the school. Pupils know the purpose of learning and try hard to reach lesson objectives. They particularly enjoy tasks which allow them to learn for themselves and to solve problems. However, pupils can become restless if they have to listen for too long. The main barrier to quicker progress is the setting of work in mixed age classes that is not varied enough to meet the needs of different groups of pupils. When this is the case, work is not always demanding enough for those pupils who are capable of reaching higher levels.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum offers a broad range of learning activities. It focuses on literacy and mathematics in its efforts to raise the standards that pupils achieve but it increasingly provides interesting learning in writing, reading and mathematics through the study of themes. These include healthy living and the Tudors, which enable pupils to transfer the skills that they have learnt in other subjects. It also includes information and communications technology (ICT), which was an area of improvement in the last inspection report. The curriculum is planned over a two year cycle, which promotes good continuity of learning. Weekly French lessons have been introduced into Key Stage 2, supplemented by an after school club. Pupils in all year groups enjoy music lessons, which are encouraging creativity. The varied physical education (PE) curriculum, which includes dance, gymnastics, and swimming for Key Stage 2 pupils, promotes a wide range of skills and fitness. Pupils speak enthusiastically of the visits and out of lesson activities, such as knitting, art and recorders that enrich their learning. Links with the partner secondary school have resulted in a Year 5 enterprise activity in which pupils made fair trade bags, and which has started preparing them for the next stage of their education. A further strength of the curriculum is its contribution to pupils' personal development, through a well-planned programme of personal, social and health education. Pupils who find learning difficult receive well thought out provision. That for gifted and talented pupils is developing.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pastoral care is good, with clear systems for safeguarding pupils and for child protection. Parents appreciate the secure and safe environment in which their children play and learn, which is sustained by regular risk assessments and firm actions regarding the very few instances of bullying. Pupils with social and emotional issues are supported and well prepared for learning. The positive play room, 'Time for U,' for example, encourages pupils to share issues that concern them. The school's good partnerships with outside agencies strengthen the school's care and support arrangements.

Academic guidance is developing satisfactorily. Tracking of pupils' progress has improved and teachers have an accurate understanding of the levels at which pupils are working. Targets resulting from this, though, are not enough of a focus in lessons for pupils to appreciate fully their importance in raising standards. Marking is very regular and always encouraging but it does not tell pupils often enough what they have achieved in their work and how to make the next steps in their learning. Support for pupils who have particular gifts and talents is developing. In some lessons, pupils are starting to assess their own work and that of their classmates, encouraging their critical thinking.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher shows good leadership. He has focused his efforts on setting a clear direction for future improvement with recent initiatives, such as the introduction of teaching the relationship between letters and the sounds they represent, helping to accelerate pupils' progress at Key Stage 1. More rigorous tracking of pupils' progress has helped staff to identify strengths and areas for improvement which are being embedded. Evaluation of the school's work continues to develop and strengthen because subject leaders are becoming increasingly more effective in monitoring the performance of their areas. Courses for teachers match closely the areas for improvement identified by the school and add to their skills base. Governors are active and strong partners in the school's continuing development. The school is fostering pupils' sense of community by working regularly with local groups and organisations, both in the town and school, and encouraging links between pupils and the locality. Together, these activities make a positive contribution to community cohesion.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

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/or disabilities make progress	3

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	3
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?	3

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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	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**

20 November 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St George's C of E (VA) Primary School, Derbyshire, SK22 4NP

I enjoyed the two days that I spent with you recently. Thank you for showing me round and telling me about your school. It was interesting to watch you learning and playing. I also enjoyed my meeting with the school council, who told me about the improvements that are being made. This letter will tell you what else I found out about your school.

You like school. You told me about the good range of clubs and the jobs that you are able to do round the school. These things help you to learn new skills, both in subjects and in working in teams and practising being leaders. You are trying hard to live healthily, helped by a wide range of PE activities.

Your school is a satisfactory school, which is led well by the headteacher. Your parents agree that the staff look after you and care for you well so that you feel safe and secure. The standards you reach are below average, although you make satisfactory progress through the school. Teaching is satisfactory. You enjoy learning, especially when you can learn for yourselves and when lessons are interesting. The work that you are given is not always at the right level for you which means that you do not make as much progress as you could. Your headteacher is keen to check that your work is at the right level for you. I have also asked him to check on marking, which is done very regularly. Often, though, it does not tell you what you have done well and what you need to do to make the next steps in your learning. Making your targets a more important part of lessons will help you to focus on how to move forward in literacy and mathematics.

I wish you all the best for the future and hope that you will work with your teachers and headteacher to improve your school further.

Lynne Blakelock

Lead inspector