

St George's Church of England School, Bourton

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113756
Local Authority	Dorset
Inspection number	311359
Inspection date	21 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Diane Wilkinson

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	89
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Frank Attrill
Headteacher	Carleen Dryburgh
Date of previous school inspection	18 April 2005
School address	Church Track Bourton Gillingham SP8 5BN
Telephone number	01747 840409
Fax number	01747 841019

Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: how effectively the school is working to minimise differences in the standards of boys and girls and increase the progress of the more able pupils, particularly in English. Evidence was gathered from lesson observations, analysis of school tracking and assessment data and discussions with the headteacher, Foundation Stage leader, English co-ordinator, members of the governing body and pupils. The views of parents were gathered from the returns of the Ofsted questionnaire. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's self-assessment is not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

St George's is a small village primary school in which most classes have mixed age groups. Attainment on entry is broadly in line with that usually found although there is a wide range. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is around average, but varies significantly between year groups. Currently all pupils are from a White British background. The school holds the Activemark award. The headteacher took up post in September 2006.

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 and this is recognised by pupils and their parents. As one parent wrote, 'We would thoroughly recommend this school to anyone. Our son loves his time here and we think his learning has improved in leaps and bounds and continues to do so.'

Care and pastoral support are excellent. As a result, pupils love coming to school and work hard. Pupils' personal development is outstanding due to the excellent programme for their personal, social and health education. From the time children enter the school they develop confidence and independence. By the time they leave in Year 6 pupils are self-assured, friendly and helpful young people with an excellent understanding of their responsibility to others. They make an outstanding contribution to the school and village community, for example as monitors or school councillors. Pupils' understanding of the importance of world citizenship is excellent. Very good links with the local church and well-planned assemblies help pupils make outstanding progress in their spiritual development and they are gaining an especially good knowledge of their own and other cultures. Relationships, both with other pupils and adults, are excellent, as is pupils' behaviour. Pupils feel very safe and secure in school as they are well aware that adults deal swiftly with any incidents of unkind behaviour or disagreements. Pupils have an excellent knowledge of how to keep safe and healthy and especially enjoy the many physical activities such as the 'Wake and Shake' sessions. Although very few pupils are poor attenders, and despite excellent attitudes to school, attendance is only about average.

Pupils are exceptionally well cared for and child protection procedures, health and safety checks and staff vetting arrangements fully comply with requirements. Staff know pupils especially well and keep a very careful check on whether any social or emotional factors may be affecting their progress. Vulnerable pupils receive especially good support. Parents wrote of their delight in the high level of care and support that their children receive and have total confidence in staff. In lessons and through marking pupils receive very good advice on how to improve. In the past two years, high quality systems for assessing and tracking pupils' progress have been introduced allowing staff to intervene quickly when this slows or accelerates. More recently the information has been used to set pupils individual improvement targets and incorporate these into planning, although staff are still involved in embedding and streamlining this process across classes.

Progress is good across the school, including for pupils who have specific learning needs. By Year 6, standards are above average and pupils gain a good range of skills to help them in their future lives. Recent curriculum developments have improved the progress of both boys and girls and they do well across a range of subjects. Boys are now making much better progress in writing as are the more able pupils. Standards in science have risen well this year where more pupils are reaching the higher levels. Over the past few years, standards have risen well in Reception and Years 1 and 2, where they are generally above average. Standards in Year 2 are lower this year as the proportion of pupils with specific learning needs is high. The rise in standards is not as strong in Year 6 because these pupils experienced weaker teaching in the past. However, the increasingly good progress being made in Years 3 to 6 indicates there is good capacity for standards to rise further.

Provision is good, including in the Foundation Stage. The curriculum has improved in recent years. It is rich and varied and motivates pupils to do well. Very good links are made between subjects so pupils have excellent opportunities to use their literacy, numeracy and information

and communication technology skills in many lessons. Pupils benefit from the range of activities on offer, which also help them achieve above average standards in music and art. Enrichment, especially in the range of after school clubs, is excellent. The curriculum has been adapted well to take account of new government guidelines and the specific needs of different groups of pupils, although the full effect of this on standards has yet to be seen. Teaching and learning are consistently good. Pupils are set challenging work, well matched to the stage at which they are working. They are clear about what they have to do, how to go about their tasks and recognise how well they have done. The school is now working hard to ensure that pupils' individual targets play a more central role in supporting learning in lessons. Practical and interesting activities enthuse and motivate pupils, although sometimes lessons are noisy which impedes concentration. Teaching assistants support different age or ability groups in each class well.

Leadership and management at all levels are good. The headteacher is a very effective leader. She has created a strong team of staff and governors who are working successfully to improve provision and raise standards. Self-evaluation is very regular, comprehensive and accurate, which allows the school to easily identify weaknesses and speedily address them. New arrangements for development planning and monitoring its progress, which fully involve both staff and governors, are very good, but the full effect of this on raising standards has yet to be seen. Nevertheless, the school's success in improving provision and progress gives confidence that it is well placed to improve further. Subject leaders, including in Foundation Stage leadership, support school improvement well and both they and class teachers are becoming more skilled in using assessment data to track pupils' progress and adjust provision accordingly. The school has forged excellent partnerships with parents, the local community and other schools and agencies, which greatly benefit pupils' education and welfare. Governors are well informed and very supportive, especially in financial planning. Individual governors use their expertise very well to enhance the quality of education.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children benefit from a good start to school and a curriculum that provides for their needs well. Teaching is effective and activities are well planned to capitalise on children's interests so they enjoy school and make good progress. Most children exceed the levels expected for their age by the time they enter Year 1, and especially good arrangements have been made to ensure their learning is built upon and extended well in Years 1 and 2. This year, particularly good progress has been made in writing due to a focused project and the success of the new programme to help children learn letters and sounds. Children's personal and social development is excellent. Independence in learning is encouraged and children are very confident to try new things. Assessment is very good and ensures children's progress is carefully tracked although, along with other classes, staff are still developing ways to involve the use of children's individual targets in lessons. Best use is made of the outdoor facilities to enhance learning, although this should improve later in the year when the new extension is completed.

What the school should do to improve further

- Build on and extend the use of pupils' individual targets to help them improve.
- Raise attendance levels.

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Annex A

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?	2
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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	1
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?	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?	1

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

22 May 2008

Inspection of St George's Church of England Primary School, Bourton, Gillingham, SP8 5BN

Dear Pupils

Thank you for welcoming me to your school and being so friendly and helpful. I particularly want to thank the pupils who gave up their lunchtime to talk to me. I think your school is good and am delighted that you and your parents agree.

Here are some of the things I think are good about your school.

- Staff take very good care of you and pay excellent attention to your welfare.
- Your personal development is outstanding. You all get on very well together and your behaviour is excellent. You are developing into mature, friendly and helpful young people.
- Teachers plan lots of interesting activities for you and you are well taught.
- You make good progress and standards are above average.
- The links your school has with parents, the village community and other schools are outstanding and support your education and welfare especially well.
- Your headteacher is leading your school very well and she gets lots of good support from staff and governors in checking how well your school is doing and helping to make it even better.

Here are the things I have asked your school to improve.

- Although you get lots of good advice on how to do better, staff know that you need to check your individual improvement targets more in lessons. You can help by always keeping your targets in mind and trying to achieve them.
- You enjoy coming to school very much so I think attendance levels could be higher. You can help by always coming to school unless there is a very good reason not to.

Thank you again for all your help and good luck for the future.

Yours sincerely

D Wilkinson Lead inspector