

# St George's Beneficial CofE Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	116346
<b>Local Authority</b>	Portsmouth
<b>Inspection number</b>	312270
<b>Inspection dates</b>	8–9 November 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Bernice Magson

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 category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	188
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs J Dawtrey
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs S Gibb
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	23 June 2003
<b>School address</b>	Hanover Street Portsea Portsmouth PO1 3BN
<b>Telephone number</b>	023 92822886
<b>Fax number</b>	023 92820179

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This small primary and nursery school includes specialist provision for pupils with physical and behavioural difficulties, and complex learning needs. It serves an area of high social deprivation in the centre of the city of Portsmouth. Pupil numbers are declining. The proportion of pupils joining or leaving the school other than at normal times is high. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds. More than a third of pupils have learning difficulties and disabilities. A very few pupils are at an early stage of speaking English. The school is part of a Children's Centre, situated on the same site. Extended services are also provided for pupils and their families.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

This is an improving school, which provides pupils with a satisfactory quality of education. Standards are improving by Year 6 and consistently in English. In 2007, the school achieved high standards by Year 6. However, standards vary considerably because of small cohorts of pupils. A strength of the school is the high quality of provision for pupils with complex needs. These pupils progress well, because their needs are identified early, and support is effective. Most parents have positive views of the school. One parent represented the views of many by commenting 'This is a great school - thank you - my son has improved so much.'

The school has a strong Christian ethos, where pupils get on well together and have good relationships with adults. Pupils' personal development and well-being is good. Within a caring and nurturing community, pupils feel safe and secure, confident that swift and effective action will be taken to solve any personal problems. As a result, pupils enjoy school and attend regularly. Attendance is at average levels. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural understanding develops well. They enjoy opportunities to influence the work of the school. For example, the school council organise charity collections and organise fund-raising activities. The 'Green Fingers' club provides a good focus on wider world issues. Pupils are involved in recycling initiatives and composting materials and food waste.

Achievement is satisfactory overall, and good in Years 3 to 6, and for those pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. This is because the quality of teaching varies across the school. In better lessons, teachers use a good range of teaching methods to extend learning. In an excellent lesson, information and communication technology (ICT) was used very effectively to motivate a group of pupils with complex learning needs. After watching a video clip and examining an interactive crime scene, pupils worked as detectives to solve the murder of Nicholas Nasty. Skilfully the teacher taught these pupils how to respond in an emergency. In Years 1 and 2, pupils are not challenged enough, work is inappropriately matched to individual needs and standards are lower, because teacher expectations are too low. Across the school, pupils say that they enjoy the outstanding range of activities, which enriches the good and creative curriculum. They have positive attitudes to learning and work hard. A recent 'Film Week' was popular and proved effective in increasing pupils' drama and communication skills.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The strong and determined leadership of the headteacher has contributed effectively to improvements in the curriculum. Senior managers share her philosophy and give good support. Challenging targets are set by senior managers and actions are starting to raise standards. However, leaders at all levels are not monitoring and evaluating pupils' performance and teaching and learning with sufficient sharpness and focus, so that expertise is shared and pupils' progress is maintained. The school has a satisfactory capacity to improve.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 3

Provision is satisfactory overall. Children enjoy school and say that 'learning is fun.' Transition to school is good because of the established links with the Children's Centre. Children have a good understanding of school routines and feel safe and secure. They socialise well together at fruit-time and share toys and equipment amicably as they play. Behaviour is good. Parents are appreciative of the happy and friendly approach of staff and find induction procedures

effective. Children have positive attitudes to their learning. They achieve satisfactorily from low starting points on entry, and their personal and social development is good. Staff work hard to engage children in discussions, prioritising well on extending children's speaking, listening and numeracy skills in practical experiences. For example, encouraged by a teacher, one child counted bananas and oranges for fifteen friends to eat at fruit-time. The curriculum has a good range of experiences in adult-led activities and exploratory play inside, but learning tasks for the outdoors are too limited and lack challenge, especially for the more able. Most children attain expected goals by the time they enter Year 1, except in early reading and writing skills. Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. The coordinator has other key responsibilities, which inhibit opportunities to monitor and review standards and provision.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- In Years 1 and 2, raise standards in reading, writing and mathematics by providing work that closely matches the needs of all pupils.
- Improve outdoor provision in the Foundation Stage, so children have increased opportunities to become involved in exploratory and independent activities, particularly for the more able.
- Increase the roles of leaders at all levels in monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance, and in leading improvement in teaching and learning.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged 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**

As numbers are small, the balance of pupils' skills and understanding vary considerably from year to year on entry. From low starting points, pupils make satisfactory progress by Year 2, although standards remain significantly below average. Several factors have an adverse impact on their progress. Well above average numbers of pupils have learning difficulties and disabilities and high numbers of pupils join or leave the school other than at normal admission times. The lack of challenging tasks in Years 1 and 2 means that pupils do not make the progress they could. This is reflected in national test results over the last few years at the end of Year 2. In Years 3 to 6, progress is more rapid, because the curriculum focuses well on creative arts, and is successful in motivating older pupils to learn. Strategies to raise attainment by Year 6 are proving successful. However, the school predicts below average standards in national tests for the current Years 2 and 6. Assessment data shows that high levels of mobility and increased numbers of pupils with specific learning needs are restricting rates of progress. Those pupils with complex learning needs and the few speaking English as an additional language (EAL) achieve well because a skilled staff team addresses their needs.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils enjoy school. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good because it is a high priority in the curriculum. Pupils have a good sense of right and wrong and good empathy for the needs and values of others. They contribute positively to the good relationships in school through the peer mentoring by the 'squabble busters.' Pupils celebrate various festivals and faiths and give support to several charities through their own efforts. Behaviour is good

and bullying is rare. Pupils feel safe and secure and are confident of swift action if any instances of inappropriate behaviour occur. Understanding about healthy lifestyles is developing well. Pupils are enthusiastic about physical activities and support out of school sports' clubs. Through the school council, pupils are involved in improving lunchtime menus. All pupils enjoy food technology lessons. Contributions are made to local community events and in support of wider world issues. The school joins in the local carnival, for example. The Green Fingers' group have planted bulbs and supported conservation activities. Skills of teamwork and co-operation are developing successfully, and satisfactory skills of literacy and numeracy, necessary for their future well-being.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

The quality of teaching is inconsistent across the school and, as a result, progress is satisfactory over time. Some teachers use an imaginative range of activities, which engage and interest pupils well. Good and excellent lessons are characterised by high teacher expectations and brisk, lively teaching. These teachers use ICT as an effective tool to widen pupils' experiences. In these better lessons, pupils have lengthy opportunities to work independently. In Years 1 and 2, teaching is satisfactory, and there is a lack of attention given to matching learning tasks to the needs of all pupils. For instance, less able pupils are not provided with sufficient materials to ensure they can achieve independently and the more able are not challenged rigorously. Across the school, the teaching of creative arts is imaginative, making a good contribution to pupils' personal development. In a good lesson in Year 4, through playing board games, the teacher developed pupils' understanding of the need for rules in society. Teaching is at least good, and often excellent in the Learning Support Unit. As a result, these vulnerable pupils make rapid progress towards their individual learning targets. Across the school, marking gives good praise and encouragement, but its use is inconsistent in helping pupils to assess their own learning.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum meets the interests and needs of pupils. They enjoy an outstanding range of additional activities, and out of school clubs. Specialist topics enable pupils to focus and learn in depth about chosen themes, which interest and excite them. For example, in a project entitled 'Brunel Week', pupils worked on practical tasks with detailed historical, scientific and design and technology links. Visits and visitors make a good contribution to increasing pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. For instance, a youth choir from Uganda has contributed highly to pupils' spiritual and cultural development. Regular visits are made to the Anglican Church for services and other educational activities. The curriculum is developing its focus on the development of basic skills in literacy and numeracy. There is a greater focus on the teaching of letters and sounds in reading in Years 1 and 2, and writing and numeracy have undergone a recent review. However, monitoring of the school's actions is not rigorous enough to ensure that new methods are fully effective. The provision for pupils' personal, social and health education and citizenship is good.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 2

Good Christian values are at the heart of the school's work in caring for its pupils. Pastoral care and support focuses effectively on the needs of the individual. Good procedures are in place for child protection, health and safety, and risk assessment. The school works hard to reduce absence rates and attendance is improving. Academic standards are analysed extensively and intensive support is targeted to those pupils with perceived weaknesses. Targets for improvement are set in literacy and numeracy. Marking gives good praise and encouragement to pupils, but only satisfactory guidance on improvement. Vulnerable pupils are helped and guided well, including those pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and the very few speaking EAL. Particularly valuable, and appreciated by parents, is the contribution of learning mentors and behavioural support staff. External agencies also provide good help, if necessary.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

Under the guidance of the headteacher the school is happy place where Christian principles are promoted effectively. The headteacher has given a clear direction in the introduction of a creative and innovative curriculum and in improving links with the Children's Centre on the same site. The able deputy provides good support to the headteacher. There is good leadership and management of provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and those with complex needs. Self-evaluation procedures are satisfactory. Strategic planning, monitoring and review of outcomes relies heavily on the headteacher and senior managers to ensure challenging targets are met. Other leaders at all levels are at early stages of development in their roles. Their monitoring and review of outcomes is not robust enough. Governors have started a training programme to address weaknesses in their role. Financial procedures are sound and monies are targeted prudently to perceived needs.

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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?	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 effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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 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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well 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 the 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?	2

<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.

**Annex A**

**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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

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**Annex B**

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

23 January 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of St George's Beneficial CofE Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Portsmouth, PO1 3BN

You may recall we visited your school recently. We enjoyed meeting you and finding out about all the exciting things which you are doing. We enjoyed very much the singing and dancing by the Watoto Choir from Uganda. Thank you for being so friendly and helpful. We think that you have a satisfactory and improving school.

We liked these things about your school:

- your standards are improving by Year 6 because you work hard in lessons
- you enjoy school, play together well and care for everyone
- you are friendly and welcoming to visitors
- you go on some exciting visits and visitors help extend your learning too
- your parents and carers are glad that you go to this school.

To make your school even better we have asked your headteacher, staff and governors to make lessons more challenging for all pupils in Years 1 and 2. We think that, in the Foundation Stage, there could be a better range of outdoor play activities. Also, we think that the headteacher, staff and governors could improve how they check on the school's performance and your progress. You can all help your teachers by trying to do as well as you can in reading, writing and mathematics.

We hope that you continue to enjoy your time at St George's Beneficial School.

Best wishes for the future.

Yours truly,

Bernice Magson

Lead Inspector