

Worcester, St George's CofE Primary School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 116923 |
| Local Authority | Worcestershire |
| Inspection number | 312446 |
| Inspection date | 22 April 2008 |
| Reporting inspector | Alison Grainger |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Voluntary aided |
| Age range of pupils | 4-11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School | 199 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | T Rawlings |
| Headteacher | Steve Mills |
| Date of previous school inspection | 18 April 2005 |
| School address | St George's Lane North Worcester WR1 1RD |
| Telephone number | 01905 619454 |
| Fax number | 01905 619471 |

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|--------------------------|---------------|
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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:

the start given to children in the Reception Year

how well teaching and academic guidance promote progress in Years 1 to 6

the quality of pupils' personal development and well-being

how well leaders evaluate the impact of provision on pupils' progress.

Evidence was gathered from the school's data on pupils' progress; visits to lessons and scrutiny of pupils' work; discussions with staff, governors, parents and pupils; and analysis of responses to the parents' 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 own assessments of these areas, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Almost three-quarters of pupils are of a White British background. Others are from a variety of minority ethnic backgrounds. The percentage of pupils at an early stage of learning English as an additional language is higher than in most schools. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average, as is the percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals. There is a wide range of individual attainment on entry. Taking the intake as a whole, children start the Reception Year with attainment a little below the level expected, with a weakness in language and literacy skills.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school. It ensures that pupils' achievement is satisfactory and also has some significant areas in which its provision is good. Pupils' personal development and well-being are promoted very effectively. This is achieved through the broad and stimulating curriculum and the high level of care and support for pupils. Parents really appreciate the way in which the school cares for their children. As one parent commented, reflecting the views of many, 'The caring ethos of the school is fantastic. As a parent, you really feel your child is important.' Another pointed out that, 'St George's has the feel of a village school in a city environment.'

Pupils enjoy school a lot. They really like the wide variety of activities that the school offers, including sports, and 'the friendly teachers'. Visits to France and Spain in which older pupils are involved are seen as a real highlight that younger pupils look forward to. Pupils are proud of their school and contribute well to the school community through, for example, conscientiously carrying out responsibilities as members of the school council and running stalls at Christmas and Summer Fayres. They are quick to point out that they also help the wider community. They have, for instance, been involved in promoting care and respect for the local park and have contributed to the design of the new city library. Almost all pupils' behaviour is exemplary and the school is a calm and racially harmonious community. Pupils grow into confident and articulate young people who respect the values and cultural traditions of others. New entrants to the school are made to feel welcome and quickly make friends.

Pupils adopt healthy lifestyles and safe practices exceptionally well. The school is very effective in promoting understanding of sensible lifestyle choices, for example, by rewarding pupils for choosing healthy snacks. Much effective action is taken to ensure that pupils not only feel safe at school but that they also know how to stay safe when out of school. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have practised using the new zebra crossing close to the school and older pupils have the opportunity to take part in cycling proficiency training.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and standards at the end of Year 6 are only a little below average in English and mathematics. Children get off to an acceptable start in the Reception Year, although not all are challenged fully and progress is slow in some important areas for some children. Progress is satisfactory in Years 1 to 6, with some good gains made in reading and particularly in science in Years 3 to 6. The school's results in the end-of-Year 6 national tests have been consistently high in science, reflecting the strong attention to practical experience and investigation in this subject. Because of the breadth of the curriculum, there are examples of pupils doing well in areas other than English and mathematics. The school won a national art competition and there is some real success in sporting activities as well.

The main reason for progress in English and mathematics being satisfactory is that the overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. There is some good teaching within the school and the amount of this is increasing. When teaching and learning are most effective, teachers have high expectations of the standards pupils are capable of attaining, match their instruction and activities closely to pupils' needs, and are very focused on what pupils need to learn next. These features of good teaching are not consistently present and this is why the impact of teaching is satisfactory rather than good overall. Pupils' overall rate of progress ensures that they are satisfactorily prepared for the next stage in their education and later life.

Academic guidance also plays a part in pupils' progress. While satisfactory, it is not as strong as the attention given to pupils' personal welfare. Real teamwork and commitment from all

staff underpin the attention to pupils' personal development and well-being. The school works closely with outside agencies to support pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There is also sensitive support for pupils at an early stage of learning English. Use of external support, together with the school's own provision, ensures that these pupils gain competence in English language at a steady rate.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. There are some good features, particularly the commitment of all staff to pupils' personal welfare. Parents value the approachability of all staff, including the headteacher. The governing body is well organised and ensures that all statutory requirements are met. The school is suitably focused on increasing pupils' rate of progress. The analysis of pupils' performance has increased and there is a satisfactory level of monitoring of the way in which provision, particularly teaching, influences pupils' progress. However, while the school has a generally accurate awareness of the effectiveness of teaching, not all weaknesses are picked up quickly. The school recognises the importance of increasing and sharpening the checks made on teaching and learning to more effectively improve the quality of lessons. Sound progress has been made since the last inspection and the school has secure capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Many parents are pleased with how well their children settle into school, enjoy being there and gain in confidence. Children's good behaviour begins in the Reception Year, where positive relationships are quickly established among children and between children and adults. Children's progress is satisfactory overall, although they are not always pushed on well enough in their learning, particularly in writing, and so move on only in small steps. The curriculum takes appropriate account of the recommended areas of learning for children of this age. Although there are some occasions when children make choices about activities, there are missed opportunities to develop their independence and initiative.

What the school should do to improve further

- Speed up children's progress in the Reception Year and increase opportunities for them to develop independence and initiative.
- Ensure that teaching always challenges all pupils fully, and is closely matched to pupils' needs and focused on what they should learn.
- Increase and sharpen the checks made on how teaching influences pupils' progress in each class.

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.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| 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

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| 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

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|--|---|
| 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 disabilities make progress | 3 |

Personal development and well-being

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|---|---|
| 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 | 1 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices | 1 |
| How well learners enjoy their education | 2 |
| The attendance of learners | 3 |
| The behaviour of learners | 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

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|--|---|
| 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 |

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

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| How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners? | 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 | 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

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St George's C of E Primary School, Worcester WR1 1RD

Thank you for helping me when I visited your school. I enjoyed talking with you, watching your lessons and looking at your books. Your school provides you with a satisfactory education and makes sure that you make satisfactory progress in your work. It does some really important things well.

What the school does best is to help you to develop into well-rounded young people. You told me that you enjoy school a lot and that you really appreciate the wide range of activities that the school provides. I saw that you behave very well and get on well with each other. You are polite and show good respect for other people's beliefs and traditions. You contribute a lot to the school and also help the community. The project to get people to care about and respect the local park is good and will help many people to enjoy being there.

You are very good at keeping fit and healthy. Many of you take up the extra sporting activities. Some of you told me about the importance of making healthy choices about what you eat. You said that the adults look after you very well and make sure that you feel safe at school. You also told me about how the school helps you to stay safe at other times, such as when using the new zebra crossing. You have many activities in addition to your lessons, which I know that you really appreciate.

The adults in school want to keep improving the school to make sure that you do as well as you can. There are some things that I have asked the school to work on now.

- Help you to make quicker progress and develop more independence in the Reception Year.
- Make sure that all the teaching is good so that you learn more quickly.
- Carry out more checks on how well the school is helping you to make progress so that the right improvements can be made more quickly.

You can help by continuing to be such pleasant young people and by always doing your best.

Yours sincerely

Alison Grainger Lead inspector