

# St George's Community Primary School

Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	127133
<b>Local Authority</b>	Dorset
<b>Inspection number</b>	315591
<b>Inspection dates</b>	6–7 November 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Anthony Shield

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

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	418
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	D Crabb
<b>Headteacher</b>	Trevor Jameson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Clarence Road Portland DT5 2BD
<b>Telephone number</b>	01305 820520
<b>Fax number</b>	01305 820520

---

<b>Age group</b>	4-11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	6–7 November 2007
<b>Inspection number</b>	315591

---

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://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 three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

St George's Community Primary School is bigger than most primary schools. Most pupils are of White British origin and live in the immediate area. On entry, pupils' attainment is below average, and a slightly above average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties. The school is newly formed in September 2006 from the amalgamation of adjacent infant and junior schools. This is the school's first inspection.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Although the school's effectiveness is currently satisfactory, this judgement does not properly reflect the journey the school has recently made. Great strides have been made since amalgamation. The headteacher's inspirational leadership has welded together two separate schools into one that has shared values and common purpose. Staff work cohesively and with dedication to promote school improvement. Whilst much remains to be done, the school can look back with pride on what has already been achieved. Parents are very supportive and they recognise the many improvements made. 'We believe the school has been transformed' is typical of many comments made by parents.

A decisive and determined approach to raising standards, particularly attainment in literacy, has characterised the school's work. Standards are rising and are now broadly average throughout the school. Children's progress quickly gathers pace in the Reception class, and pupils are well prepared for the start of Year 1. Although pupils' achievement is satisfactory across the school, more able pupils do not always reach the standards expected of them, particularly in mathematics and science. By the end of Year 6, some pupils still lack confidence in applying numeracy skills and in understanding investigative skills in science.

The school's strong commitment to the care of each child results in friendly and responsible pupils. Their good personal development is a strength. Good relationships throughout the school community and an atmosphere of trust and respect instil confidence and a sense of well-being in pupils. Good procedures for pupils' care, guidance and support are in place. Pupils are eager to please. Their enthusiasm is infectious and contributes much to their thorough enjoyment of school. Behaviour is good, and pupils are polite and courteous.

Whilst teaching is satisfactory, it is improving rapidly and much is good. As yet, however, its impact on pupils' overall progress remains satisfactory. Classrooms are attractive and lively environments in which teachers make learning enjoyable and fun. Pupils respond to this approach enthusiastically and attitudes to learning are good. Although teachers plan work carefully, it does not always provide enough challenge, particularly for more able pupils, who are not given enough opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning. The satisfactory curriculum is enriched by a wide range of clubs, especially for music and sport.

A key factor in the school's improvement has been the focus it has given to listening to what the pupils themselves have to say. This attention to the pupils' voice has ensured they feel valued and involved in their own learning. Leadership and management are good, and governors and managers at all levels are providing clear direction. Subject leaders are developing their roles well, analysing provision in their subjects and developing strategies for improvement, although some do this more confidently than others. Self-evaluation is good, but whilst targets are realistic, they are not yet sufficiently challenging. The way forward, building on what has already been achieved, is clearly mapped out. Given what has already been achieved in a short time, the school's capacity to improve further is good.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Children enter the Reception class with below average skills, particularly in language and literacy and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. They make good progress, and most transfer to Year 1 with attainment that is broadly in line with expected levels. This is down to

well-planned and often inspiring teaching, a lively and relevant curriculum and a clear understanding of individual children's needs. Children are increasingly confident in making choices, sharing and taking turns. Because of the warm welcome they receive, and the close partnership with parents and pre-school settings, children settle quickly and happily into school routines. Members of staff work effectively to monitor children's progress and target any support where it is needed. Although the outdoor area is not as effective a learning environment as it could be, there are sensible plans to develop this. The Foundation Stage is well led and managed and good curricular links are made to Year 1. As one parent commented: 'The Reception class is a fantastic environment for new children and a great introduction to the "big school". After just one term my child's reading and writing progress is amazing'.

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

- extend pupils' application of basic skills in mathematics across the curriculum and their investigative skills in science to raise standards to match those in English
- provide greater challenge for more able pupils and offer more opportunities for pupils to be self-directed and independent in their learning
- build the capacity of all managers to check and evaluate provision, to set challenging targets and get the very best out of all pupils.

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 the impact of the improving quality of provision filters through, the rate of pupils' progress is improving. Whilst a small number of pupils underachieved during the last year, this underachievement has now been eliminated and all are now making satisfactory, and in many cases good, progress through the school.

Children get off to a flying start in the Reception class, and they are well prepared for entry into Year 1. Standards in Key Stage 1 are broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics, although writing is a relatively weaker area. Although fewer pupils than might be expected reach high levels, achievement is satisfactory. Standards are also broadly average in English, mathematics and science by the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils' progress during the year since amalgamation is marked, particularly in English, and lost ground has largely been made up. However, the proportion of more able pupils reaching higher levels is below average in mathematics and significantly below in science. Pupils with learning difficulties make securely satisfactory progress through the school.

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

### **Grade: 2**

The value placed on nurturing pupils' personal development is reflected in pupils' confident manner, their good behaviour and their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Their enthusiasm for school and all that it offers them contributes to the purposeful and harmonious atmosphere throughout the school. Older pupils reflect sensibly on how much the school has improved: 'There are lots more things to do; it's much better'. Pupils are attentive and work hard in lessons. They have a clear understanding of right and wrong and form warm

relationships with each other and adults. There is a real sense of community when pupils come together for assembly. Pupils report that there is little bullying, and swift action is taken by staff to resolve any incidents. They feel safe in school and are confident of the support of adults.

Pupils' good awareness of how to lead healthy lives is actively encouraged through the curriculum and in opportunities to take part in sport. Pupils relish opportunities to contribute to school life through the school council. Suggestions about how to help save the environment, for example by setting up recycling and energy-saving projects, were readily taken up by staff. Pupils know their views are valued and look forward to opportunities to comment on teaching and the curriculum. They contribute well to the wider community through charity fund-raising and taking part in local musical and sporting events.

Rates of attendance remains stubbornly below average, despite the school's good efforts. Holidays taken during termtime by parents and children have an adverse impact on attendance and pupils' achievement. Pupils are prepared satisfactorily for their future economic well-being.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Improving the quality of teaching and learning has been at the core of school improvement, and coaching and mentoring has been very effective in ensuring more consistently good teaching. Weak teaching has been challenged and largely eradicated. Planning for lessons is thorough and teachers work closely together to ensure a consistent approach. They use a variety of methods to sustain pupils' interest. Effective open-ended questioning probes to check understanding and confident use of information and communication technology support pupils' learning effectively. Pupils' progress is monitored carefully and teachers use this information well to set clear personal learning targets for them to aim at. As a result, most tasks set meet the wide range of pupils' abilities. However, this is not always the case, and more able pupils are not always challenged enough, slowing their progress. Opportunities for pupils to work on their own and to take greater responsibility for their own learning are not always explored. Teachers manage their pupils very well and relationships are good. They use a range of strategies to praise and encourage pupils thereby giving them confidence to succeed. Teaching assistants offer well targeted support. Marking is helpful and gives clear guidance on what pupils need to do to improve.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum is broad and balanced and increasingly relevant to pupils' needs. Together with improvements to teaching, the curriculum is beginning to impact positively on pupils' progress. A strong emphasis on literacy, through the 'Portland Literacy Project', has successfully raised standards, and a sensible approach to develop basic writing skills across subjects has been effective. This is now being extended to develop the application of other basic skills across subjects. The overall effect is to engage pupils and make learning fun. However, the curriculum does not always successfully build on pupils' prior learning, particularly for the more able. The school has a strong curricular partnership with the local secondary arts college to ease the transition into Year 7. Educational visits and visitors are well used to widen pupils' horizons.

There is a very wide range of well supported after-school activities, including literacy and numeracy clubs. These have a good impact on pupils' learning and personal development.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The school's commitment to the care and welfare of every pupil is clear in the good quality relationships that pervade the school. Members of staff know pupils well and provide excellent role models to help them feel secure and enjoy learning. Pupils respond positively to being treated with fairness and respect. Vulnerable pupils are quickly identified and their progress carefully monitored. Many are given personal mentors to support them both emotionally and academically. Safeguarding procedures are up to date and robust. The school's partnership with parents is good but has not yet been fully successful in ensuring that all pupils attend school regularly. Academic guidance is good. Pupils know their targets and their progress is monitored carefully. Intervention to support pupils is carefully targeted.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The outstanding and visionary leadership of the headteacher, alongside his clear and analytical approach to self-evaluation, has been an example and the guiding principle of the school's good leadership and management. He is well supported by his deputy and senior team who manage their areas of responsibility with increasing authority. Staff have embraced change with enthusiasm. Their support and commitment in driving the school forward has been crucial. However, subject leadership is not of such consistently good quality as that of senior managers but is developing very well as good practice is shared more widely and leaders grow into their roles.

Improving standards of literacy has been a key priority over the last year and these developments have been well led and managed. There have been many innovative developments. For example, the school has adopted the Portland Literacy Project and this has had a marked impact on improving basic literacy skills. Learning from this example, other subject leaders have developed their own strategies for improvement. As yet, it is too soon to judge the full impact of these initiatives, but early signs are promising.

Comprehensive performance data is being collected and analysed. This results in good quality and realistic self-evaluation. Realistic targets are being set to raise standards but as yet, these are not challenging enough. Committed and hardworking governors are making a particularly strong contribution through their links with subjects and their thoughtful but challenging insights into the school's work.

**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](http://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	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### 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	3

### 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?	3
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>	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 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	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

8 November 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St George's Community Primary School, Portland, DT5 2BD

Thank you for welcoming us to your school. We greatly enjoyed talking to you, and particularly liked the friendly welcome you gave us. Your school is improving rapidly and it is providing you with a satisfactory education.

What we liked most about your school:

- your headteacher and teachers have worked successfully to get the new combined school off to a good start, and to make it even better
- you are well behaved and friendly and play together well
- you make good progress in the Reception class
- most of you make satisfactory progress, but those of you capable of reaching the highest standards could still do better, particularly in mathematics and science
- you try hard in lessons and enjoy all the activities and clubs the school arranges for you
- your teachers make your lessons interesting and fun
- the school takes good care of you, ensuring you feel safe and well looked after.

What we have asked your school to do now:

- help you to do even better, particularly in using your number skills in all subjects and in investigating things in science
- make sure that all the teachers set you work to make you think harder and give you a chance to find things out for yourselves
- make sure that all staff know what they have to do to make your school even better!

Thank you once again for your help during the inspection. With best wishes for the future!

Yours sincerely

Mr Tony Shield Lead Inspector