

St Georges VA Church Primary School

Inspection report - amended

Unique Reference Number	134830
Local Authority	North Somerset
Inspection number	316283
Inspection dates	12–13 December 2007
Reporting inspector	David Curtis

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	196
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ian Peddleston
Headteacher	Sandra Medley
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Pastures Avenue St Georges Weston-super-Mare BS22 7SA
Telephone number	01934 426901
Fax number	01934 426901

Age group	3-11
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Amended Report Addendum

Report amended due to factual inaccuracy

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school opened in a brand new building in September 2006. Since then, the number on roll has doubled, with pupils joining from a very wide range of previous primary school experiences. The school has a local authority funded nursery for 32 children who attend either morning or afternoon. Currently, about a half of these children transfers into the Reception class. Attainment on entry into Reception is in line with expectations for four year olds. The school has a few pupils from minority ethnic families. No pupils receive specialist funding to learn English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is below the national average, as is the proportion entitled to free school meals.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. At the heart of the school's success is the effective way in which the headteacher's vision and determination have created a flourishing school, which is valued by parents and pupils. In a relatively short time, the headteacher, staff and governors have established a school which is functioning effectively and where pupils' achievement is good and standards are above average. The school's success, particularly in the way it meets the needs of new pupils, is summed up accurately by a parent who wrote, 'I am very happy with the school. My children are very happy and have improved so much since they joined. All the staff are happy and friendly and nothing is too much trouble.' Good teaching, supported by an exciting curriculum that focuses on pupils developing their basic skills in subjects, such as science and history, contributes successfully to the good progress made. As a result, pupils are prepared well for their future economic well-being both socially and academically. In the Foundation Stage, progress is satisfactory with the progress made by children in communication, language and literacy a weak area. Assessment for this age group is not sufficiently accurate in identifying children's progress. In Years 1 to 6, pupils enjoy their lessons and work hard because teachers' planning is matched closely to individual learning needs. Teachers and teaching assistants work in effective partnership to ensure pupils make good progress in lessons. The senior leadership team and subject leaders have set challenging targets for pupils in the current Year 6 and they are on course to achieve these. Pupils' personal development and well-being are good because they are underpinned by strengths in the quality of care, guidance and support. The successful way in which pupils are integrated into the school is the result of the nurturing support given by all staff. Pupils like school and are very keen to learn. Their attendance is good. Behaviour in lessons is often exemplary and is good during breaks and lunch times. Pupils, including young children in the Nursery, are totally aware of the need to eat healthily and to keep fit. As one three year old put it, 'Yum, yum, fruit is good for your tummy.' Pupils are safe in school and say that there is always an adult to whom they can turn with worries or concerns. Through the effective school council, pupils gain a good understanding of the democratic process. Pupils particularly enjoy the wide range of exciting extra-curricular activities provided in sport, music, foreign languages and arts and crafts. Whilst leadership and management have been effective in establishing the new school, governors and subject leaders are not focused sufficiently on holding the school to account for the standards achieved. Even though achievement and standards are good, the systems for checking that every pupil is reaching their full potential are not yet rigorous enough. As a result, it is difficult for governors and senior staff to ensure that all pupils are making the best possible progress. However, governors, many of whom are new to their role, are committed to bring about further improvements and, based on the progress made to date, the school has good capacity for future improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children's achievement in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Children join in Nursery or Reception with skills and abilities, which are similar to other children of their age. They make good progress in their personal, physical and mathematical development and meet the goals expected of them in these areas by the end of the Reception Year. School data shows that children's communication, language and literacy skills lag behind other areas of their learning. The school has responded by implementing a systematic programme for teaching phonics to

ensure that children securely know their letters and sounds by the end of the Foundation Stage. In both classes, teachers and support staff are developing expertise in observing and recording children's learning. However, assessment procedures are not sufficiently secure to ensure that children make the best possible progress in all areas of their learning, particularly their early literacy skills. Good attention to children's welfare and positive relationships with their parents help children to settle happily into school routines and learn to behave well. They become increasingly independent and enjoy learning because teachers provide imaginative activities, which encourage them to explore. In the Nursery, children excitedly play with animals in a tray of 'snow', wrap 'parcels' with enormous concentration, and learn to write their names in Christmas cards. Children in Reception work together well outside, for example, as 'builders', enjoying measuring and making notes on a clipboard. The outdoor environment is used satisfactorily but is not fully developed to offer children a full range of activities to support their learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Refine the systems for assessment in the Foundation Stage to ensure that children make good progress in all areas of learning, especially in communication, language and literacy.
- Increase the rigour of monitoring by senior leaders, including governors, to ensure that all pupils reach their full potential.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good and standards are above average in English, mathematics, science and ICT. Pupils' progress in writing is a strength, particularly in the way pupils combine literacy and ICT skills to produce, for example, impressive leaflets on the life and times of Queen Victoria. In mathematics, pupils make good use of their strategies for mental calculations when they take on problem solving activities, such as in Year 5 where they had to find the shortest and longest routes for 'Santa's Journey'. In science, pupils use literacy skills successfully to write up results of experiments. Numeracy skills are used effectively to record data in tables and to produce accurate graphs to show findings. There is some inconsistency between classes in progress in the investigative and experimental aspect of science. From work on display, for example, Roman mosaics and Celtic masks made in Year 3, pupils' standards in art and design are good. Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress in lessons and over time because of effective support from teachers and teaching assistants.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils show a great deal of mutual trust and respect for each other. The school council is effective and regularly seeks the views of all pupils. Its recent multimedia presentation to staff on the extended curriculum demonstrates how the council has made significant improvements to the school's use of Golden Time. Behaviour is excellent in class and although at lunch times behaviour by those new pupils who are 'finding their feet' can be a bit lively, behaviour is good overall. Pupils enjoy raising funds for charities and in taking part in activities with other local schools, for example at the council chamber in Weston-super-Mare and a diocesan festival at Wells Cathedral. The take up of extra-curricular activities is high. Pupils really value the many sporting activities and understand the importance of these in keeping them fit and healthy. Such is the popularity of

sport that when asked what they would like to see the school improve, a number replied, 'More PE please.'

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils really enjoy their lessons and work hard. The way in which they work independently is particularly impressive. The reasons for this are twofold. The first is that teachers' planning meets the differing learning needs of pupils and ensures that pupils are challenged and extended in their learning. The second reason is that teachers share the learning intention for the lesson and make clear what they expect pupils to have learnt by the end. As a result, pupils understand exactly what they should do and settle to work immediately and confidently. Most teachers mark pupils' work in a way which pupils recognise as telling them how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. However, there is a degree of inconsistency between year groups in the quality of marking. Pupils value the support they receive from teachers and teaching assistants. In particular, they know that teachers will help them if they are stuck and need extra help in understanding their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The exciting curriculum underpins pupils' good progress. The way in which it provides very good opportunities for pupils to use literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in many other subjects is particularly impressive. Planning themes such as, 'Sixty Glorious Years' means that pupils can see the links between subjects and, as a result, learning becomes so much more meaningful. In particular, it stimulates them to pursue individual lines of enquiry, including internet research. Currently, there is some inconsistency in planned opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in scientific investigations. Good curriculum enrichment, including the wide range of extra-curricular activities, makes a strong contribution to pupils' personal development, especially their enjoyment and achievement.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school complies fully with all statutory requirements for child protection and safeguarding pupils. It is very successful in nurturing pupils' development, especially those who join the school and find it difficult to cope with change and establish friendships in a new setting. The support for pupils with learning difficulties is good. When necessary, the school makes effective use of outside agencies to support their needs. The school provides good academic support for its pupils. It has a tracking system in place that identifies pupils' performance and this is used to provide support programmes for pupils who are identified as potentially falling behind in their learning. Involving pupils in understanding their own targets is still at an early stage of development.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher has established an effective team ethos amongst all staff and governors, which contributes significantly to the school's success. The school knows itself well and the areas identified for improvement are aimed at raising standards, particularly now that the school is operating almost at its intended capacity. It actively seeks the views of parents and pupils in its future development. The key strength of its initial development has been the successful way in which it has integrated new staff, pupils and governors into its day-to-day life. As a result, the school is functioning as an effective community in which pupils flourish. During its initial phase, the school has dealt successfully with the teething problems usually associated with new schools. Senior staff recognise that, in its next phase of development, a greater focus needs to be placed on monitoring academic performance. Whilst these processes are in place to enable the school to have a clear understanding of its strengths and weaknesses, they are not robust enough to ensure that governors and others are able to hold the school effectively to account for the standards it achieves. This has prevented governors from acting sufficiently as a critical friend. Nevertheless, governors, many of whom are new to the role, are undertaking regular training to support them in their work.

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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	NA
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	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?	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	2
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	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?	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

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	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

- 17 December 2007 Dear Pupils Inspection of St Georges VA Church Primary School, Weston-super-Mare BS22 7SA Thank you very much for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. In particular, we would like to thank the school council and those of you in Year 6 who gave up part of lunchtime to meet us. I am delighted to tell you that you go to a good school. These are some of the things that are particularly good.
- You make good progress in your learning and reach good standards in your work; especially in the way you use literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in subjects, such as history.
- Your behaviour in lessons is excellent and behaviour at lunchtime is good.
- You like the way you are taught and find that teachers giving you learning intentions and success criteria really helps you.
- The school gives you a very good range of clubs which you enjoy attending.
- All staff look after you well, especially when you join the school and have to make friends and adjust to new rules and responsibilities.
- Those adults who lead and manage the school are successful in creating a school that you enjoy attending and being a part of. There are two things, which we think would make your school even better. Therefore, we have asked your teachers and governors to:
 - improve the way in which they check up on your progress in the Reception class so that you make better progress in learning to read and write
 - make sure that they are checking your progress to ensure that you are doing the best work that you possibly can in school. Thank you again for an enjoyable two days. I am sure you will continue to work hard and enjoy your lessons and all your school gives you. Yours sincerely
David Curtis Lead inspector

Annex B

17 December 2007

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of St Georges VA Church Primary School, Weston-super-Mare
BS22 7SA**

Thank you very much for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. In particular, we would like to thank the school council and those of you in Year 6 who gave up part of lunchtime to meet us. I am delighted to tell you that you go to a good school. These are some of the things that are particularly good.

- You make good progress in your learning and reach good standards in your work; especially in the way you use literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in subjects, such as history.
- Your behaviour in lessons is excellent and behaviour at lunchtime is good.
- You like the way you are taught and find that teachers giving you learning intentions and success criteria really helps you.
- The school gives you a very good range of clubs which you enjoy attending.
- All staff look after you well, especially when you join the school and have to make friends and adjust to new rules and responsibilities.
- Those adults who lead and manage the school are successful in creating a school that you enjoy attending and being a part of.

There are two things, which we think would make your school even better. Therefore, we have asked your teachers and governors to:

- improve the way in which they check up on your progress in the Reception class so that you make better progress in learning to read and write
- make sure that they are checking your progress to ensure that you are doing the best work that you possibly can in school.

Thank you again for an enjoyable two days. I am sure you will continue to work hard and enjoy your lessons and all your school gives you.

Yours sincerely

David Curtis
Lead inspector