

St George's CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101044
Local Authority	Wandsworth
Inspection number	323396
Inspection dates	25–26 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Susan Thomas-Pounce

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	222
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev Canon Geoff Vevers
Headteacher	Mrs Janet Hilary
Date of previous school inspection	7 February 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Corunna Road Battersea London SW8 4JS
Telephone number	020 7622 1870
Fax number	020 7498 9683

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an inner-city primary school serving an area of high-rise housing. Four fifths of all pupils have a mother tongue other than English, and more than 23 languages are spoken. An above average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, most of whom find aspects of English and mathematics challenging. Many pupils experience social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Mobility of pupils is high and continuous with a significant number coming and going at various times during the year. The school has provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage in a Nursery and a Reception class. There is a breakfast and an after school club. The school has a number of awards including the National Healthy School Accreditation and the Activemark (Sportsmark). The school is a designated 'lead school' for social and emotional well-being (SEAL) in the Borough.

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 where there has been significant and rapid improvement since the last inspection. Progress has clearly accelerated rapidly and is now good throughout the school. In this focused and successful school, the strong Christian ethos promotes inclusion, so that pupils are known and treated as individuals. As a result all pupils flourish in this caring and calm environment. Underpinning the school's success is the high quality of leadership and management at all levels within the school. The highly respected headteacher sets the tone and is unstinting in her efforts to drive the school forward. There is a deep commitment to raising standards and, linked to the excellent support and guidance from staff, this means that pupils' personal development is outstanding. Pupils of different backgrounds and abilities achieve well due to good teaching and learning, and this is greatly enriched by an exciting curriculum and very strong links with the community.

Pupils and their parents hold the school in high esteem. They agree that school is a very happy and wonderfully caring place to be. One noted, 'our headteacher is unique; she always makes time to talk to us and takes our views seriously', while another reported that 'the school keeps us well informed so we can help our children at home'. Several commented on the significant improvements to the learning environment and said they were privileged to have such a school. Inspection evidence shows that the parents' positive views are entirely justified.

There is a noticeable trend of improvement rising from the younger pupils because the school has developed a centre of excellence in the Foundation Stage, where provision is outstanding. Children get off to a strong start in developing their speaking, reading, writing and mathematical skills. They grow in confidence and gain the social skills that ensure that they can work successfully with others. Standards as pupils leave Year 2 and Year 6 are average. Given pupils' below-average starting points on entry to the school, this represents good achievement. Current data demonstrate that standards are rapidly improving. These older pupils have not benefited from the more recent changes that the school has put in place in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities also make good progress.

Since the last inspection there has been an improving trend in the number of pupils who achieve expected levels and above. These improvements are as a result of rigorous efforts to improve teaching and the careful tracking of pupils' progress. Pupils are developing good skills in many subjects and these skills, when combined with outstanding personal development and excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, ensure that from their often very low starting points, pupils develop the confidence and the skills needed for their future lives. They are highly motivated learners and their behaviour is exemplary.

The highly effective governing body and skilled staff contribute greatly to the success of the school. The school's work to support the whole family is exemplary and demonstrates outstanding care, guidance and support. As a result, despite often deprived or fragile circumstances, pupils thrive and reach their potential. Since the last inspection the accommodation has been greatly improved and pupils' learning experiences are rich, diverse and exciting. The community sees the school as a haven for children who live mostly in flats with little or no space to play and exercise. The school has created lovely gardens, a successful vegetable plot and an uplifting courtyard garden set in the heart of the school. Pupils helped to design the refurbished playground and exciting play equipment.

The school is sensibly working to improve standards in writing and mathematics. These initiatives are developing well; improvements can already be seen, especially to the mathematics curriculum where pupils' progress is accelerating. The headteacher has made an outstanding contribution to the rapid improvement of the school. She has a clear and accurate grasp of the school's strengths and areas for improvement from rigorous monitoring and provides a very clear direction for the school's further development through a sharply focused plan. The strategic vision of the headteacher and governors is exemplified by the long-term strategy of building improvement from the early years upwards. Such strengths in leadership, alongside the impressive track record since the last inspection, clearly show that the school has outstanding capacity to sustain the rapid rate of school improvement.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

The Early Years Foundation Stage provides an outstanding quality of education. Children enter with very low levels of knowledge and skills but they make excellent progress in their learning and development. They now enter Key Stage 1 at levels more appropriate for their age. As a result of recently improved provision some exceed these levels, especially in their literacy and numeracy skills. There is a very positive relationship with parents and children's individual needs are well understood by members of staff. This leads to very focused levels of support. Even the youngest children settle well into established routines and are soon confident contributors to activities. Excellent relations exist with local and specialist organisations. The accommodation provides an excellent and safe setting for activities; consequently all areas of learning are well supported. Ample outdoor space is readily accessible and extends the scope for activities even during wet weather. There is a good balance between indoor and outdoor activities. There is an outstanding range of resources, which provides opportunities for imaginative play. Children enjoy their activities and behave exceptionally well. The quality of teaching is outstanding because teachers and assistants understand how young children learn and plan activities in detail. They interact well with the children and use questions to encourage them to think about their ideas and explore them in more depth. Teachers are exemplary role models in the use of speech and how to treat others. Children's welfare and safety is promoted exceptionally well. Accurate self-evaluation and effective planning reflects outstanding leadership.

What the school should do to improve further

- Consolidate and extend throughout the school initiatives to sustain the improvements in writing and mathematics made this year.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress and achieve well. They enter Year 1 below national expectations and leave Key Stage 2 with a majority reaching standards that are average, and this is despite an above-average proportion having learning difficulties and/or disabilities. This represents good progress and achievement given the pupils' low starting points. They make good progress because of the good and, at times, outstanding teaching. Achievement in mathematics and writing throughout the school is weaker than the development of reading. Initiatives to improve achievement in the higher levels of writing are working. By the end of Year 2 pupils have attained average standards in each of the last three years. In Key Stage 2 they have not yet had time to fully overcome the legacy of past lower achievement. However, standards are rising,

especially in mathematics, and are currently much higher than in 2008. This is because the school has made the literacy and numeracy curriculum more interesting and challenging for the pupils. It has also refined the systems for monitoring and assessing pupils' work so that pupils know what they need to do to improve. Across the school, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language make good progress towards their targets.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The personal development and well-being of pupils are outstanding. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and spiritual and cultural development has improved since the last inspection. Pupils enjoy their time and feel safe in school. As one boy said, 'The school is the only place I feel safe.' A parent said about her daughter, 'she comes to school even if feeling ill.' Behaviour is outstanding because pupils observe a 'Calm School Code' and form firm relationships with others. They play happily and mix well with others from different backgrounds. Pupils respond well to the high profile given to healthy lifestyles and keeping safe. They take advantage of healthy foods on offer in school and attend sports clubs in high numbers. One girl has a daily skipping routine to keep herself fit. Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the school and wider communities. They willingly take on responsibilities in school, such as Year 5 and 6 pupils acting as young leaders in play. They also support the local community, through activities such as 'Big Tidy Up' where pupils identified an area of ground and cleared it of debris. They also organise litter-picking in the local area. Pupils make good progress towards achieving competencies for later life, reflected in the achievement of the Basic Skills Quality Mark, the ability to work well alongside others and the regular experiences they get in workplace environments, for example with the neighbouring Nine Elms Market.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers expect pupils to be actively involved in their learning. The quality of pupils' work shows application and effort. Lesson plans are generally well adapted to the pupils' maturity and ability groups in each class. Pupils' interest is caught and held well through practical activities and stimulating resources. During a mathematics lesson, pupils were excitedly using the Egyptian number system to solve problems. Lessons are reasonably brisk and in the best examples teachers use questioning skillfully to prompt thoughtful answers. Most of the work set for groups of differing abilities is challenging, but not always sufficiently so for the more-able. Teachers and teaching assistants work very well as a team to help all pupils to do their best. Marking is used effectively to ensure work is completed. Recent improvements mean that teachers are making it clearer to pupils how to make their work better.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The very well-planned, integrated curriculum contributes, in great measure, to the good progress made by pupils. Teachers plan links between subjects effectively, with a very good emphasis on providing practical, first-hand experiences that make learning more relevant and exciting. There is very strong consistency in planning across all classes. During the year all pupils have

access to the well-designed topics, with many linked to out-of-school visits. These broaden learning beyond the norm, with pupils given very regular opportunities to explore learning through art, music and other creative activities. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is extremely well supported through activities such as circle time. The strong emphasis on healthy eating and physical education makes a substantial contribution to pupils' outstanding personal development and well-being. This fully justifies the Healthy School Award and Activemark. The learning environment, both inside the building and outside, has been transformed. The children and parents are rightly proud of the calm, vibrant and inclusive learning community to which they belong.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school values its pupils enormously and provides outstanding care, guidance and support for them. This contributes very well to their enjoyment, excellent behaviour and the good progress they make. The school provides pupils with a very safe and secure environment. Safeguarding procedures are very thorough. Teachers know their pupils extremely well and monitor their academic progress very systematically. Since the last inspection the school has continued to refine and develop its systems to assess pupils' academic progress. These are now used effectively to track pupils' performance so that teachers can quickly identify underachievement and take remedial action. The school perseveres well with any unsettled pupils and has successfully re-engaged previously excluded pupils in their learning. Recognition of the high-quality strategies to engage pupils in their learning has resulted in the school being designated as a lead school in the Local Authority for social and emotional aspects of learning. Strategies to improve attendance have been extremely successful over recent years. Significant features have been a 'walking bus' through the estate and diligent first-day absence monitoring. The school makes excellent use of outside agency expertise to support school provision.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding. School leaders are utterly determined to provide the very best for pupils. They have a very clear understanding of the school's strengths and a very clear view of how they want the school to improve further. The inspirational headteacher is very well supported by a team of teaching and non-teaching staff who have created a well-organised, colourful and interesting environment, which is conducive to learning and in which pupils flourish. Leaders and managers are very successful in promoting equality of opportunity and preventing any discrimination. Everyone's contribution is encouraged and valued.

Very strong teamwork provides many opportunities for staff to learn from each other's strengths and share the best practice in school. This leads to consistently good teaching and learning in the classrooms and the rapid acceleration in pupils' progress. The school is continually seeking ways to improve further. The leadership team, one of whom is a specialist consultant, have actively built partnerships with other schools and share their expertise on a regular basis. The school makes a very significant contribution to the development of community cohesion. The wide range of visits, visitors and creative activities enrich pupils' multicultural experiences and underpin their high levels of respect for others, including those of other faiths and cultures.

Governance is excellent. The governing body is exceptionally well led, and its outstanding work is helping to ensure that pupils gain the skills that give them a strong start in their lives.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
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 learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

08 July 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St George's CofE Primary School, London, SW8 4JS

We really enjoyed our visit to your school last week. You will not be surprised to hear that we judged your school to be good. Since the last time inspectors came to the school, many things have got better and from your work in books, we can see that the standard of your work continues to improve. There are several features of your school that are outstanding. We were particularly impressed by:

- the outstanding progress children make in the Foundation Stage
- your exemplary behaviour; you were very polite, and really helpful
- your headteacher, staff and governors - together they form an excellent team
- the ways in which staff care for you and help you with your work if you are having difficulties
- how much you enjoy coming to school and taking part enthusiastically in all the interesting and different activities that the headteacher and the staff provide for you
- how much you enjoyed helping to design your new playground
- how much you love the bright and well-cared-for classrooms and colourful and helpful displays around the school.

I was also impressed with the many ways you contribute to school life, and know how excited you were when you dug up the potatoes and picked the peas in your vegetable garden. I wonder if the strawberries are ready yet?

I am pleased to see that the new mathematics work is helping you all to make good progress, and most of you are doing well with the writing project. I have asked the school to carry on with these projects that are helping you to do even better in writing and mathematics.

With very best wishes for your future.

Yours faithfully

Susan Thomas-Pounce

Lead Inspector