

Redditch, St George's CofE First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116843
Local Authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	326461
Inspection dates	27–28 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Sarah Conway

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	First
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	229
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	Andrew Fry
Headteacher	Caroline Redfern
Date of previous school inspection	27 September 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Stevenson Avenue Redditch B98 8LU
Telephone number	01527 62263

Age group	3–9
Inspection dates	27–28 November 2008
Inspection number	326461

Fax number

01527 585915

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Located in the centre of Redditch, St George's draws its pupils from an increasingly disadvantaged area. The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is significantly higher than usual. The majority of pupils come from homes where English is not the first language. The range of languages and ethnic backgrounds represented across the school is wide, with a high proportion of children being from Pakistani backgrounds. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. When children join the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) in the Nursery, their level of skills and knowledge is exceptionally low. Following a building project, a Sure Start Children's Centre opened at the school in September 2007.

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 in which the highly dedicated staff work hard to overcome a number of challenges. Pupils behave well and work and play well together in a harmonious, secure atmosphere. They value their teachers and feel very safe, and both of these factors contribute to their good personal development. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school, pleased with the progress their children make and appreciative of how 'easy staff are to talk to'.

When children arrive in the Nursery, immediate attention is given to developing their language and social skills. Children make outstanding progress in the EYFS because they benefit from excellent teaching and exceptionally high levels of care, but they still enter Year 1 with standards below those expected for their age. The good teaching of pupils in Key Stage 1 means that by the time they leave Year 2, standards have caught up and are broadly average. Teaching is satisfactory during Key Stage 2 so that by the time pupils leave the school in Year 4, standards are again broadly average. Standards are above average in writing as a result of a recent whole-school focus, but are slightly below average in mathematics because lessons are less challenging in this subject, especially for more able pupils. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress, but it is not as good as that of other pupils because they are more often absent from school.

The curriculum is effectively planned to engage all pupils including those learning English as an additional language, and this helps them to develop their confidence, enjoy their learning and make good progress. Pupils' understanding of how to keep healthy is outstanding and this is evident on a daily basis. Their preparation for future life is satisfactory. Child protection procedures are thorough. Regular health and safety checks are robust and careful risk assessments are undertaken when needed. Pastoral care is excellent and academic guidance satisfactory.

The school is led and managed well by the headteacher, who maintains a clear focus on improving standards. The school's work with both parents and outside agencies to secure the well-being of children so that they are ready to learn is outstanding. The progress of individual pupils is regularly monitored against challenging targets and assessment information used to improve the curriculum. Governors are supportive and actively engaged in the school on a day-to-day basis but do not always offer appropriate challenge on raising standards and achievement. Senior and middle leaders have an accurate understanding of what the school needs to do to improve further and the capacity to improve is good.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Many children are drawn from areas with high levels of social and economic disadvantage. In addition, a large majority enter the school knowing no or little English and are at the very early stages of learning their home language. The personal and social development of most children is very low. This contributes to the exceptionally low levels of skills and knowledge of children entering the Nursery. Adults work very effectively as a team across Nursery and Reception, developing excellent relationships with both children and their parents so that children quickly settle in. Classrooms are bright and vibrant places in which to learn. The exciting range of activities, both inside and outside, are carefully planned so that children are constantly

challenged and always engaged in learning. These activities, combined with sensitive care and exemplary teaching, accelerate children's learning so that they make outstanding progress. Children quickly develop from learning and playing in isolation to joining in with each other and learning to take turns. As a result, when they enter Year 1, although standards are below those expected for their age, children have highly positive attitudes towards learning and work together exceptionally well. Excellent leadership means that assessment information is used very effectively to ensure the curriculum focuses on meeting the individual needs of all children.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of teaching in Key Stage 2, especially in mathematics, so that pupils achieve as highly in all subjects as they do in writing.
- Improve the involvement of school governors in checking pupils' progress to ensure all groups make as much progress as they should.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Most children begin school with exceptionally low levels of skills and understanding and many speak little or no English. By the end of the EYFS the outstanding care and excellent provision children receive ensure that even though few exceed the goals expected for children of this age, they are very well prepared for more formal learning in the National Curriculum. In Key Stage 1, teachers maintain a focus on developing pupils' social and language skills so that they make good progress. They enter Year 3 having caught up with other children nationally so that standards are broadly average.

By the time pupils leave at the end of Year 4, standards are just below average in mathematics because lessons are less challenging, especially for higher attaining pupils. However, the school has recently successfully targeted previous slow progress in writing through the introduction of 'Big Write' materials and strategies, and standards are now above average in writing. In reading they are average. Pupils who join the school late achieve standards well below those of pupils who have been at the school since Reception. Poor attendance contributes to the slower progress made by pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities than other groups.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

An important reason why most pupils do well is that they have positive attitudes to learning and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils feel safe and move around the school safely, demonstrating an ability to make sensible choices. They enjoy their lessons because they like their teachers and 'are always learning something new'. They have an excellent understanding of how to live healthily and it was clear during the inspection that this translates into what they choose to eat and how they participate in sport, both in and outside lessons. They readily take on additional responsibilities such as fundraising for Children in Need or helping at the 'friendship stop' in the playground to support anyone who needs a friend. Pupils make a good contribution to the running of the school, although members of the school council tend to respond to staff suggestions rather than proposing their own ideas for improvement, and would like to have opportunities to take part in organised playground activities during break-times. They contribute well to the local community through their links with the church and other local organisations. Pupils' good personal and social development and ability to work well together contribute to preparing them for the future, although this is

hindered by their lack of financial understanding combined with some limited achievement in mathematics.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

In all classes, relationships are good and teachers have high expectations about behaviour and give lots of praise and encouragement so that pupils are keen to learn and try hard. The school is successful in involving parents in their children's learning through a combination of special events, such as Grandparents' Day or 'Play and Stay' in the EYFS, and being readily available to parents on a day-to-day basis. Teaching is most effective when teachers match activities to meet the range of pupils' needs and build on pupils' direct experiences, as seen when they were writing about a recent visit or developing their understanding of empty and full through filling and emptying different containers. There is a consistent focus on language development through expecting pupils to develop their responses to questions, answering in complete sentences and using the correct vocabulary. The use of teaching assistants to aid learning is inconsistent. In older classes pupils are dependent on the support of adults, and this limits the progress they can make. Teachers' subject knowledge is less secure in mathematics than it is in other subject areas.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy the interesting curriculum. All classrooms provide a welcoming and stimulating environment in which to learn. Teachers' planning is thorough and takes account of the needs of the large number of children learning English as an additional language. In some classes, activities do not always challenge high ability pupils sufficiently, especially in mathematics. The school has begun to plan meaningful links between different subjects and themed days and weeks increase children's understanding and enjoyment of the curriculum. A number of clubs and a range of visits and visitors enrich pupils' learning. Children appreciate the number of computers available to them. This and the effective teaching of information and communication technology (ICT) have contributed to pupils' improved ICT skills. The curriculum contributes well to children's good understanding of different cultures and to their personal development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The outstanding care and support given to pupils is a major strength of the school. It ensures that all children feel welcome and secure, and have the confidence to do well. Children from a range of backgrounds and cultures get on well together, respecting each other and being alert to one another's needs. The establishment of a Children's Centre on site is contributing to even better knowledge of families at an early stage. The school does all that it can to improve attendance, which is below average because of high levels of illness and extended holidays taken in term-time. Pupils know adults will resolve any concerns they have. They receive helpful academic guidance on a day-to-day basis in the classroom. They know that their teachers will help them if they are 'stuck'. Pupils have individual learning targets but not all pupils know

them sufficiently. Marking is regular but often not linked to targets and does not always show pupils what they need to do to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher sets the tone for the high quality of care and support that is evident throughout the school. The school consults widely with parents and pupils about what goes on in the school. There are good systems in place for evaluating the quality of teaching and results in different subjects. The monitoring of pupils' progress is not yet sufficiently fine-tuned. There is robust monitoring of the progress made by individual pupils throughout the year, but not enough on how well different groups of pupils are doing. This means that occasionally teaching is not sufficiently adjusted to meet the needs of all children equally well. The school makes a good contribution to community cohesion, particularly through the provision of adult learning classes and its work in securing good progress for children learning English as an additional language. Governors are supportive and contribute to school self-evaluation but do not focus sufficiently on holding the school to account by ensuring that all groups achieve as well as they can.

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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	2

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	3

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?	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	2
The extent to which 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 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

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 eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

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

1 December 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St George's C of E (VC) First School, Redditch B98 8LU

Thank you very much for being so welcoming and helpful during our recent visit to your school. We were particularly struck by how well you work together and look after each other. You said you really enjoyed school because you like your teachers and are always learning something new. St George's is a good place to learn, and here are some of the other things we found out.

- Children in the Nursery and Reception class get off to a flying start.
- You make good progress because you are taught well, particularly in the younger classes.
- Teachers and other adults look after you very well.
- By the time you leave Year 4, you have done well to reach average standards.
- You are better at reading and writing than you are at mathematics.
- Your behaviour is good and you are always eager to learn.
- You have an excellent understanding of how to lead a healthy life.
- Your headteacher leads the school very well and all staff work hard to help her make the school an even better place for you to learn.
- Your school has excellent partnerships with your parents and people outside the school who all help to keep you safe and well so that you can learn.

We have asked the school to do two things to get even better.

- The way you are taught mathematics in older classes needs to improve so that you make as much progress as you do in writing.
- School governors should keep a check on the progress of different groups of children so that all groups make as much progress as they can.

You can help your teachers by coming to school regularly and by always being ready and eager to learn.

With our very best wishes for the future,

Sarah Conway Lead inspector