

Worcester, St George's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116924
Local Authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	326491
Inspection date	25 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Patricia Potheary

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	211
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	Brian McGinley
Headteacher	Michael Painter
Date of previous school inspection	21 February 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Thorneloe Walk Barbourne Worcester WR1 3JY
Telephone number	01905 25841

Age group	4–11
Inspection date	25 March 2009
Inspection number	326491

Fax number

01905 27621

Age group	4-11
Inspection date	25 March 2009
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- the rate of progress for different ability groups, particularly in writing
- how well teaching and guidance support progress, and how well the curriculum supports personal development
- how well school leaders use data to improve the progress pupils make.

Evidence was gathered from analysis of school data, the school's self evaluation, the previous inspection report, pupils' work, parent questionnaires, school policies, monitoring reports, and other documents. Lessons were observed and discussions were held with pupils, senior staff, governors and the school improvement partner. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self- evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

St George's is an averaged-sized primary school. Pupils come from a wide mix of backgrounds. Most are Catholic and of White British origin. A small minority are from other ethnic groups. A broadly average number of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There is one Reception class in the Early Years Foundation Stage. There is also an after-school club run by a private contractor.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

St Georges is a good school. It is a happy, vibrant community where pupils achieve well, make good academic progress and show outstanding personal development. This results from good teaching, good leadership and management and an excellent curriculum. A deep spiritual energy pervades pupils' attitudes to learning and the respect they show to others and the environment. This reflects their very strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding.

When children enter Reception, their attainment is broadly average. Because they make good progress in all year groups, by the time they leave Year 6, attainment is above average. The more able and those with learning difficulties make consistently good progress but for those of average ability, progress in some subjects is satisfactory rather than good, especially in writing. Although class teachers track pupils' progress towards annual targets, subject leaders and senior staff are aware that they do not monitor this progress regularly enough. This means that it takes longer than necessary to gauge the impact of actions taken to improve progress for different groups, such as those with average ability. It also makes it more difficult to be sure that timely guidance is given to those falling behind.

Pupils enjoy school enormously, reflected in their good attendance, excellent behaviour and very good attitudes to learning. They find lessons interesting and take pride in their work. Teachers show considerable skill in making lessons motivating and relating them to pupils' experiences. This means that pupils become confident to contribute their ideas, working well together. In one lesson about zoos, for example, pupils quickly learned how to write and discuss persuasively, following some very clear imaginative activities. Pupils also show great skill in using computers and other technology, bringing an added dimension to their work in subjects as diverse as history, drama and science. Teachers know pupils well and plan carefully to meet their different needs. Nevertheless, individual pupils do not have specific targets to help them to understand what they need to do to improve. The school recognises this and has recently begun to set individual targets in writing. Pupils are now more closely involved in assessing their own written work and this is beginning to increase the progress they make.

The school meets all requirements to safeguard pupils and provides good care, guidance and support overall. Links with other agencies to support pupils' well-being are excellent and very strong support is given to pupils and their families should they need it.

Parents are very positive about all aspects of the school and praise the 'lovely kind children' who make the school experience such a rewarding one. They particularly appreciate the way pupils are prepared to 'take their place in the world' with an emphasis on 'opening their minds to the wider picture'. This reflects the good work undertaken by the school to make sure that pupils respect and understand the lives of others whose beliefs and cultures are different from their own and so live harmoniously within the wider community. It also reflects the outstanding curriculum which enables their children to contribute an extraordinary amount to the community and be so enthusiastic about taking on responsibility. There are numerous examples of this, from the young person excusing herself at lunch to go and wipe tables, to the large number of pupil responsibilities, including prefects and playground buddies. This active participation of pupils makes so much difference to the running of the school. For example, pupils run the school magazine as well as eco, transport, technology and school councils. They sell produce from the gardening club and are very keen environmentalists.

The curriculum is also exceptionally rich in providing numerous projects, visits and clubs and is particularly effective in helping pupils to lead safe and healthy lives. One five-year-old explained: 'I don't choose to eat sweets so much any more'. There is a considerable take up of extra sports, and the school attracts many awards for the quality of different initiatives, including an International Schools Award 2008 for their work with a school in Zambia. With their resulting excellent personal skills, their good basic skills and an exceptional ability to get things done and work in teams, pupils are very well prepared for their next school and future lives.

The new headteacher has expertly overseen considerable changes recently, from new senior staff and governors through to considerable refurbishment and improved provision. This has all been achieved whilst maintaining good progress and the high quality of pupils' personal development and meeting challenging targets. In addition, good self-evaluation has secured improvements to the quality of teaching, better outcomes in reading and increased progress made by more able pupils and boys. The capacity to continue improving is good.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision and leadership in Reception are good. Children enter with quite varied skills and, although these are broadly average, they are low in areas of literacy and numeracy. However, through skilled engaging teaching, good progress is made and children leave this stage working securely within expected levels. Children show excellent development in their personal skills with greatly increased confidence and independence in learning. Each day, for example, they select a team leader and comment on leadership style. The exciting stimulating environment encourages children to explore ideas for themselves, with their work flowing naturally between the classroom and outside. In one delightful session, children were busy making models of dinosaurs, discussing their dinosaur art work and planning the dinosaur food they were making. Opportunities to stimulate language development are excellent and include children confidently answering the register in French. There is also direct and effective teacher input in key areas, particularly number and phonic work.

The Reception leader shows considerable insight into improving the quality of provision and the teaching assistant contributes substantially to this work. In particular, recently improved and very thorough assessment and monitoring are leading to far more rapid progress in reading and numeracy this term. Children's writing skills develop more slowly and it is recognized that opportunities to write, although increasing, remain underdeveloped. Before children arrive, high quality work is undertaken with the families to help them settle quickly. Outstanding support ensures that children's well-being is secure and that they are very well prepared to make a smooth transition into Year 1.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the rate of progress made by pupils of average ability, particularly in writing.
- Involve pupils more closely in knowing what they need to do to improve by setting individual targets in key subjects.
- Monitor the progress of pupils much more regularly so that the impact of school improvement initiatives can be swiftly evaluated and timely guidance provided where needed.

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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?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
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?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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/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	2
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	1

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?	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	2
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	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

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

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St George's Catholic Primary School, Worcester WR1 3JY

Thank you for being so welcoming when we visited your school. We very much enjoyed meeting you, joining you for lunch and seeing some of your lessons.

Yours is a good school with many interesting things going on, just as you described. Senior staff work hard to keep developing the school and, for this reason, the standards you reach and the progress you make are good.

Skilled teaching helps you to make good progress in your lessons. As a result, you do well in reading, mathematics and science. We like the way you really enjoy your lessons and always try to do your best. You told us that your teachers make lessons fun and interesting and we can see that they help you to do well. We have, however, asked them to make sure all of you make good progress in writing. In addition, we want them to check on your progress more frequently to be clear about how well you are doing. We would also like you to have individual targets in some subjects, so that you can see very clearly what you need to do next to improve. We are sure that you will discuss this with your teachers and help them by working hard and sharing your ideas.

An outstanding curriculum helps you to make excellent progress in your social and personal skills. You were keen to tell us that the school keeps you safe and looks after you very well. It is therefore very pleasing to see that you are helping yourselves by taking plenty of exercise and eating a healthy diet. Your behaviour is excellent; especially in the way you value learning and respect others, including those who have different beliefs and ways of living.

The responsibilities that you take on within the school and wider community are impressive, especially the way you contribute your ideas to helping the environment and to improving the school. It is good to know that you feel the school takes your views seriously and that you can make a difference. You clearly enjoy coming to school. We think that this, alongside your good quality basic skills and mature attitudes, helps to prepare you very well for your next school and future lives.

Yours faithfully

Patricia Potheary

Lead inspector