

St George's VC CofE Primary School and Nursery

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135055
Local Authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	329018
Inspection dates	1–2 July 2009
Reporting inspector	John Horwood

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 controlled
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	234
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	Les Bishton
Headteacher	Jennifer Wadlow
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Plane Tree Close Golbert Scott Way Kidderminster DY10 2HE
Telephone number	01562 824206

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	1–2 July 2009
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average-size primary school which opened following a local reorganisation of schools in September 2007. Many staff are new to their posts. A new school building is planned for completion on the same site by 2011, and currently about 50% of the classes are in mobile accommodation. The number of pupils who come from minority ethnic groups is higher than the national average and the number of pupils whose first language is not English is much higher. The majority of these pupils are from Asian Bangladeshi backgrounds. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above the national average. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below the national average. The Early Years Foundation Stage provision is provided in a part-time Nursery and a Reception class. Although the school is designated as a children's centre, this will not be on site until the new school building opens in 2011.

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. Parents recognise this and the vast majority are pleased with all it provides. Parental views were typified by one comment which said, 'I find St George's to be a happy, caring school in which each child's ability and personality is well catered for.' Pupils are also very supportive of the school. They really appreciate how friendly and helpful the staff are within lessons. They also enjoy school because everyone gets on so well together and older pupils are proud of how they support the younger children during the day.

All leaders and managers have a clear commitment to raising standards. The quality of leadership and management is good. Its success in opening the new school and improving the teaching and academic progress significantly since 2008 demonstrates the school's good capacity to improve further. Governors carry out their statutory duties well and are actively involved with the work of the school. The contribution the school makes to community cohesion is good. It is based on a secure understanding of what is needed, from which an action plan has been incorporated into the school development plan. Pupils have a good awareness of other faiths and cultures in Britain and the wider world both through the curriculum and through the celebration of diversity within the school and the local community.

Children enter school with skills and abilities well below expected levels. The Early Years Foundation Stage provision is good and children make good progress. This good progress continues throughout the school and pupils reach standards that are close to the national average by the end of Year 6. Staff ensure that each pupil is supported well and that all are given equal opportunities to make good progress in their academic and personal skills. The progress of pupils who speak little or no English when they join the school is slower initially but through good support and intervention strategies they soon acquire sufficient language to accelerate their learning.

Good teaching ensures that work mostly matches the needs of all pupils. However, the electronic tracking system has only been in use for a short time and so teachers are not yet consistently using it to its maximum effect to plan work to ensure that pupils can make even better progress. Pupils are now working to clear and challenging targets in all subjects but again there has not been sufficient time for these to fully impact on progress. The good curriculum is adapted to meet pupils' needs but at present does not offer pupils enough opportunities to apply their skills and knowledge independently, or to develop their enjoyment through investigation and research. A good range of extra-curricular activities enriches pupils' learning and personal development.

Care, guidance and support are good and the school's strong links with external agencies ensure good support for pupils who find learning difficult. The very good links with the secondary school help the older pupils when they move between the schools. Pupils' personal development and well-being are good overall. Relationships are very good throughout the school. Pupils behave well, enjoy school and know how to keep themselves safe. Attendance is well below the national average because, in spite of resolute action by the school, there is a small but significant number of pupils who have very poor attendance records. Pupils make a good contribution to the community, eat healthily and take part in sport with enthusiasm. Their secure basic academic skills and good social and personal skills are well supported by the other skills such as gardening and ecology awareness to ensure pupils are well prepared for their future.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Very warm relationships enable all children to settle well. The exceptionally caring team of adults provide outstanding standards of care for children's well-being. Play is at the very heart of all learning opportunities and so pupils have lots of fun. Most pupils make good progress over time in most areas of learning. Those who are learning English as an additional language do take a little longer to settle and initially listen to and watch their friends, but by the end of Reception they are well motivated and very happy in school.

Children achieve well in relation to extremely low starting points. They learn to play together and enjoy imaginative activities both inside and out. They love the 'Forest School' where they climb trees and enjoy snacks in a log circle. Adults are very involved in ongoing assessments which build up a clear picture of each individual child. As a result, planning of activities takes good account of children's skills and capabilities and has led to particularly good progress in aspects of reading, language and communication.

Provision is very well led and managed, and ensures that the individual strengths of staff are well used and developed. The leader ensures that children are not over-directed but sensitively supported to do their best and make their own choices and decisions wherever possible. She also knows that the challenge now facing the school is to promote more consistently the emotional and creative development of each child as well as important skills of writing and some aspects of number work in particular.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure the new progress monitoring system is consistently used to support planning in lessons to help pupils make more progress.
- Develop pupils' enjoyment of learning by providing more opportunities for pupils to apply their skills and knowledge independently, including through more investigative work.
- Work with parents to improve attendance.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils enter Year 1 with standards well below the national average and make good progress to be below average by the end of Year 2. Standards are improving and the 2009 school data show improvement from the first results in 2008. In Key Stage 2 the story is similar with pupils' current standards close to the national average in English, mathematics and science. The current system for tracking pupils' progress has been demonstrated to be accurate and shows that all year groups are making greater progress this year than last year. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make similar progress in lessons because of good support by teaching assistants. Higher ability pupils make good progress because they are given extension work within lessons to provide greater challenge.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and the school operates as a very harmonious community. Relationships are very good with mutual respect between adults and pupils as well as among pupils. The older pupils support the younger ones well, including

helping them with their work and looking after them at break times. Behaviour is good ensuring that all pupils learn in a safe and happy environment. Pupils say they enjoy all aspects of school. Poor attendance figures are not a reflection that pupils do not want to come to school but more a reflection that a few families do not always make sure their children are able to get to school on time and regularly. The poor attendance of these pupils is reflected in the lower standards reached by the time they leave school. Pupils eat healthily during the day and are aware of what choices they should make. This has contributed to the school being awarded Healthy School status. Pupils are mature and sensible and take on the responsibilities available to them, such as being school councillors and helping in the library and the playground. They grow their own vegetables, of which they are very proud.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers have good subject knowledge and enthusiastically adopt new developments, especially in literacy and numeracy. They now have reliable assessment data to use in their planning and, although not yet fully embedded in its use, this mostly enables work to be matched to pupils' needs. More consistent use and greater experience with the assessment systems is needed to enable pupils to be more challenged to make greater progress. Teachers make the learning objectives very clear and are encouraging pupils to assess their own progress and understanding. Learning is good because pupils have positive attitudes to the range of learning activities provided. Pupils are eager to please the adults and are gaining in confidence. Occasionally, when they are not actively involved in the lesson or when the lesson is not exciting, they are less motivated. Teaching assistants provide good support for those who need additional help.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

To meet the needs of the pupils, the school has developed a curriculum that is broad and balanced with an increasing focus on phonics and writing. A start has been made to develop links between subjects through interesting projects and themes so that the curriculum is consistently engaging for all pupils. However, there are not yet enough opportunities for pupils to apply their skills and knowledge independently. The curriculum is enriched by a good range of interesting visits and trips. This year each class has benefitted from two visits each term as the school tries to give all pupils a wide experience of the community around them. The current Year 6 are excited about their trip to Disneyland Paris to which pupils from all backgrounds are joining in, demonstrating the cohesiveness of the school. There is a good range of clubs which pupils say they enjoy greatly and good use is made of the extensive grounds for activities such as 'Forest School'. The many well-attended sports clubs have contributed to the school being awarded the Activemark. The curriculum ensures that pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, as well as those with specific gifts or talents, are well provided for.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The pastoral care of pupils is good. The school has established strong links with external agencies to help ensure pupils are cared for and supported well. Safeguarding, child protection, and health and safety requirements are met. There are good systems for managing behaviour and

monitoring attendance. Punctuality and absence are strictly recorded and followed up by the school staff, supported by the local authority. Actions including prosecution and removal from roll have been taken but there are still a small number of regular absentees. Staff know pupils well and all pupils feel valued. Pupils say that teachers are very fair. The school works well to promote inclusion. Pupils who need extra help are effectively provided for and make good progress. Individual education plans are used well and staff help to ensure that pupils receive appropriate resources. Academic guidance is good following the introduction of a comprehensive electronic system to track progress. Pupils have clear academic targets, but in pupils' books marking is still a little inconsistent in pointing out what needs to be done to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership team contains a healthy mix of experience and enthusiasm with a good range of complementary skills. There has already been a good impact on improving the school. The school development plan is focused on raising attainment, and challenging targets are set. The self-evaluation is good and the leadership team has acted well to ensure that this new primary setting caters well for its new pupil population. A review on the needs of the school and the local community has been carried out and a governor has been appointed with responsibility for community cohesion. Community cohesion is already good within both the school and the local community and pupils have a good understanding of the global and national issues through curriculum content. Governance is good from a well-structured and knowledgeable governing body.

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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 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?	2
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	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?	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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	4
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 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	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**

3 July 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St George's VC CofE Primary School and Nursery, Kidderminster, DY10 2HE

Thank you for welcoming us to your school. It was great talking to you in your classrooms and at lunchtime in your spacious and lovely school grounds. We will all remember how hot it was during the inspection. We were really impressed by your enthusiasm for learning and how polite and friendly you were to us.

Your school is providing you with a good education and it is making sure you make good progress in your work. These are some of the good things about your school.

- The staff care about you and look after you well.
- Relationships throughout the school are very good.
- Your behaviour is good ensuring you can all make progress.
- You have developed good social skills.
- Teaching and learning are good and you make good progress.
- There is a good range of clubs and after-school activities. We were particularly impressed by eco and gardening activities you carry out and how Year 6 help look after the younger children.
- Your headteacher and staff are working hard to improve your learning further.

In order to improve the school further, we have asked the headteacher to:

- make sure the work always matches your individual learning needs so that you can make better progress
- help you enjoy lessons still more by giving you more opportunities to do independent work, which helps you become more confident with the work
- encourage the families of those pupils are often absent or late to make sure they come to school so that they can make the same progress as others. You can help the school by continuing to work hard. We wish you all the best for the future.

Yours faithfully

John Horwood

Lead inspector