

St George's Church of England Infant and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113456
Local Authority	Devon
Inspection number	338177
Inspection dates	18–19 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Christine Huard

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	196
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sheila Bloomfield
Headteacher	Babs Johnson
Date of previous school inspection	28 February 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 17 lessons or parts of lessons. Seven teachers were observed teaching. Meetings were held with staff, governors and pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at some of the documentation. This included the school improvement plan, monitoring and assessment information as well as planning and governors' minutes. The school's procedures for ensuring pupils' safety were closely scrutinised. In addition, 72 parents' and carers' questionnaires were analysed as well as 15 returned by staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the impact of strategies to establish a greater consistency of good teaching across the school
- the success of strategies adopted to improve writing throughout the school
- how successfully the school is adapting its curriculum and adopting strategies to motivate boys and raise the level of their attainment
- to what extent, and with what success, the school has implemented its plans to promote community cohesion.

Information about the school

St George's is situated just outside Bideford and is of average size. Nearly all the pupils are of White British heritage and none is at an early stage of learning to speak English. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities or a statement of special educational needs is above average. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in one Nursery and two Reception classes. The school has gained a number of awards including Healthy Schools, Silver Artsmark and Activemark. A building project is currently in progress to provide the school with a new classroom for the Nursery.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

St George's Infant and Nursery is a good school. The great majority of parents and carers are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. 'My children have both had a very good experience at this school and made great progress,' wrote one. Other comments focused on the good care provided, such as 'My children have been given great support from all teachers and staff; they have always shown great interest and concern for children's needs on an individual level.' The pupils, judging by their bright, smiling faces, really enjoy their learning. They work hard and achieve well.

Pupils achieve well because teaching is good. There is a robust monitoring programme and the school has secure evidence to show that actions have been taken to address any weaknesses. Teachers plan well together and this ensures that there is good continuity across year groups. Marking and targets are used well to show pupils what they need to do to further improve their work and identify next steps in learning.

The school has introduced a good range of strategies to improve pupils' writing and narrow the gap in attainment between this and reading. The use of a video cartoon about jungle creatures really inspired and motivated boys and girls alike in Year 2. The class teachers created a mini jungle-like environment for the pupils to visualise and this really helped them with their writing. All pupils are beginning to write with greater confidence. There is good improvement in the imaginative and creative content, but spelling and punctuation skills are not yet of the same good quality.

The performance of boys has significantly improved during this year. This is because the school has examined its curriculum carefully and adapted it well to ensure that the interests of boys and girls are reflected. The presence of builders on site has provided excitement and inspiration for all age groups. Younger children in the Early Years Foundation Stage use 'mobile phones' to promote speaking and listening skills and write and 'mark make' with great gusto using their clipboards. Pupils in Year 1 have happily built the 'Three Pigs' houses and those in Year 2 role play with great enthusiasm.

The school has good links in the local community. It has examined its strategies for promoting community cohesion and drawn up an appropriate action plan. There are appropriate links with the international community, which have been established through the church, and the school has good plans to sponsor a child in Tanzania. The pupils gain some awareness of other faiths and cultures but have only a limited awareness of the multi-ethnic nature of the United Kingdom. The school has explored the possibility of establishing a link with another school to develop this further but these plans have not yet been fully implemented.

There is a very strong sense of teamwork in the school. This was exemplified during the

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inspection when several staff were hit by a prevalent stomach bug. Staff rallied round to help and support each other and the supply staff. The headteacher and all staff are committed to making the best possible provision for the pupils. Senior leaders carefully analyse the school's performance and as a result self-evaluation is accurate and development planning is sharply focused. These are key factors in the school's success and, together with the improvements identified in writing and in boys' attainment, confirm its good capacity for further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Narrow the gap between reading and writing by focusing on the basic skills of spelling and punctuation as well as the imaginative content of pupils' writing.
- Improve community cohesion by establishing links with other establishments beyond the local community.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Pupils make good progress from the time they enter the school. They achieve well and really enjoy their learning. This is evident in the enthusiastic way in which they tackle their tasks and challenges. They make good progress in their lessons because tasks are interesting and well matched to individual need. Pupils in Year 2 were investigating rotation in mathematics. While some pupils were engaged in working out how to make a pattern rotating a tile a quarter turn at a time, higher attaining pupils were designing their own tiles and discovering different ways of forming rotating patterns.

Although children's starting points vary from year to year, they are usually well below those expected for their age. Children make consistently good progress in acquiring good language, literacy and mathematical skills. Attainment in writing and mathematics has consistently been at average levels at the end of Year 2 for the last few years. Attainment in reading is generally good with an above average proportion of pupils attaining Level 3 at the end of Year 2. Attention has been focused on developing pupils' speaking skills and their understanding of sounds and letters. This has accelerated many pupils' progress in both reading and writing. Pupils use their improved literacy skills well in other subjects. Higher attaining pupils are challenged very effectively and this enables them to achieve well. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities benefit significantly from individual and small group support which contributes well to their good progress. Pupils' good academic progress and personal qualities prepare them effectively for later learning.

The school's Healthy Schools and Activemark awards are testament to the good understanding pupils' show, for their ages, of the need to adopt a healthy lifestyle. They know how to keep themselves safe. The school provides swimming lessons for pupils in Year 1, a sensible and wise move for a school so near the coast. Pupils are reflective. The Christian ethos of the school shines through in the care and thoughtfulness pupils show towards one another. The playground is a happy and harmonious place. Pupils are proud of their eco-bronze status and have a very responsible attitude towards issues

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such as recycling and composting. They gain a sound awareness of other cultures by learning about and celebrating the festivals of other faiths.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The curriculum is broad and is constantly reviewed to ensure it is creative and reflects the interests of the pupils. While there is an appropriate emphasis on literacy and numeracy, other subjects are covered well. Pupils' personal development is enhanced by circle-time and the opportunity to discuss feelings and issues of concern, all of which contribute to the pupils' feelings of safety when they are in school. The examples of toys with a wind-up mechanism made by the pupils in design and technology and the vibrant artwork on display reinforce how pupils' work is valued and appreciated, and fully endorse the school's silver Artsmark award.

Teachers have high expectations of both behaviour and academic achievement. Firm boundaries and consistent systems for dealing with inappropriate behaviour help all staff to maintain an atmosphere in lessons which promotes exploration and enjoyment and which is still conducive to good learning. Teachers ensure that pupils know and

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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understand what they are going to. Staff and pupils make good use of interactive whiteboards to enhance learning and maximise enjoyment. Careful analysis of the day's learning contributes well to the next day's planning. Teachers are well supported by a team of skilled teaching assistants who make an important contribution to pupils' learning, both in class and through small group support for those pupils who need it. The skill of the teaching assistants is one the key factors in the good support, care and guidance provided for pupils. The school has very strong links with a wide range of external agencies and these strengthen the good support provided for more vulnerable pupils. Very good arrangements are in place to support children entering the Nursery class. The good links with the junior school considerably eases the transition to Year 3 for the Year 2 pupils.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and senior leadership team have a clear vision for the school. There is a commitment and determination to improve from all staff. Appropriate priorities for development have been identified because the quality of self-evaluation is good and the school knows where improvement is needed. The focus on accelerating pupils' progress and raising standards, particularly in writing, and the actions taken, are proving to be effective. Governors are very supportive and knowledgeable about the school. They fully understand where improvement is needed. They take their monitoring role seriously and visits are regular and focused. Regular newsletters, consultation afternoons and evenings, and an attractive website provide parents and carers with good information. Staff and governors are very conscientious in ensuring pupils' safety and health. A strong emphasis is placed on child protection and all staff have received relevant training. At the time of the inspection, safeguarding procedures were robust and met all statutory requirements. The school ensures that pupils, whatever their ethnic or cultural background, or their ability, are valued and free from discrimination. Equality of opportunity for all pupils is promoted effectively. The school has a good understanding of, and participation in, the local community, although plans to extend links into the national and international sphere are at an earlier stage of development.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make good progress in the Nursery because of the wide variety of activities provided for them and the good range of resources and equipment available for them to use both inside and out. Staff have 'seized the moment' and have made a large building site for the children to work on. It is a joy to see small girls and boys, fully equipped in hard hats and armed with clipboards or filling cement mixers and manipulating mini, but fully workable, diggers. It promotes learning well in all areas and children are thriving and making very good progress in a range of skills from speaking and writing to physical development. Good progress continues through Reception because children are eager to learn and teaching is lively and exciting. There is a good balance between those activities led by the teacher and those that children choose for themselves. There are many opportunities for children to pursue their early literacy and numeracy skills and writing and number areas are used successfully in all classrooms. Children use the interactive whiteboards and computer games well to reinforce their learning effectively. Questioning skills of all staff are good and these encourage children to explain their thinking and reasoning so that they fully understand their learning. Children learn to share and take turns and develop independence and the ability to make choices. The outside provision for Reception children is very cramped at present because of ongoing building work. This restricts the level of children's learning outside. The care and attention given to children's welfare are excellent. Children's individual needs are known and acted upon and children feel very safe and secure. Leadership and management are good. Ongoing monitoring of the progress children are making ensures that activities are well matched to their needs on a day-to-day basis. Links with parents and carers are excellent and the provision of workshops to enable them to take a full part in their

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children's education is of great value.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The great majority of parents and carers who returned the questionnaires are extremely happy with the school. All are happy with their child's experience at the school and think that the teaching is good. Most have no concerns. A few parents and carers thought their children were not making sufficient progress. Inspection evidence shows that pupils make good progress. Some feel that they do not get enough information about their child's progress. Inspectors found that regular parent/teacher consultations are held and that the school has a good 'open door' policy.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St George's C of E Infant and Nursery School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 72 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 196 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	50	69	22	31	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	44	61	26	36	2	3	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	28	53	26	36	5	7	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	33	46	33	46	5	7	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	35	49	32	44	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	38	53	25	35	4	6	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	36	50	31	43	2	3	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	27	38	38	53	3	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	34	47	35	49	0	0	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	25	35	40	56	4	6	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	28	39	38	53	1	1	2	2
The school is led and managed effectively	24	33	36	50	4	6	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	39	54	30	42	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



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22 March 2010

Dear Children

Inspection of St George's Infant and Nursery School, Northam EX39 1HT

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. We really enjoyed seeing you work so hard in lessons and play so happily outside. You showed us how much you enjoy your school and are pleased with how well you are doing. You are right to be pleased, because it is a good school!

What we found out about your school:

- You really enjoy school and make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- You behave well in class, which helps you to do well in your learning, and out in the playground, which makes it a really happy place to be.
- Your headteacher and governors are good at running the school and understand well how they could make it even better.
- You understand well how to stay safe and live healthy lives.
- Your teachers work hard to plan interesting lessons and mark your work carefully.
- All staff take very good care of you and keep you safe.
- Children in the Nursery and Reception classes get a good start to their school life.

What we would like the school to do now:

- Help you to spell and punctuate your really exciting writing a little better.
- Set up some links with schools in different areas so that you learn more about the different cultures in the United Kingdom.

Good luck for the future. We hope you continue to enjoy school as much as you do now.

Yours sincerely

Christine Huard

Lead Inspector

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