

# St George's Roman Catholic Primary School, York

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	121647
<b>Local Authority</b>	York
<b>Inspection number</b>	339987
<b>Inspection dates</b>	1–2 July 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Keith Bardon

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	200
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Patricia Holder
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Roseleen Mazza
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	22 November 2006
<b>School address</b>	1 Winterscale Street Fishergate York YO10 4BT
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 15 lessons, observed 9 teachers, held meetings with staff, members of the governing body, and pupils, and talked informally with parents and carers. The inspectors observed other aspects of the school's work and looked at a range of evidence including policies, the improvement plans, pupils' work and the school's records indicating pupils' progress and attainment. The inspectors also analysed the 61 questionnaires returned by parents and carers.

The inspectors reviewed many aspects of the school's work and looked in detail at the following:

- standards in writing in Key Stage 1 and the effects of the school's strategies to improve them
- improvements in attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 and whether they are being maintained and if this applies to all groups of pupils
- the consistency of teaching across the school
- leaders' and managers' understanding of where further improvement is needed to enable the school to continue to develop
- the recent changes in Early Years Foundation Stage and how they are affecting children's attainment and progress.

## Information about the school

St George's is a little smaller than many primary schools. It serves the local community close to the historic city centre. Approximately one third of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, including a small number who are of Gypsy/Roma heritage. Over half of the minority ethnic pupils speak English as an additional language and a small proportion are at an early stage of learning English. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average and no pupils have a statement for their special educational needs. The number of pupils who join or leave the school part way through their primary education is quite high. The school has achieved the Basic Skills Quality Mark and recently been re-accredited with the Artsmark Gold award. Since the last inspection the school has experienced changes in leadership and management, with the deputy headteacher becoming the substantive headteacher and a new deputy headteacher being appointed from the school staff.

**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 is a good school which takes full account of and responds well to the diverse cultural and social backgrounds of its pupils. As a result, pupils enjoy school, achieve well and make good progress in their learning. The caring ethos which permeates all aspects of school life ensures that all pupils feel welcome and valued. As a result of this and the strong emphasis the school places on their personal development, pupils make excellent progress in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and mature into considerate, thoughtful and respectful individuals with an extremely strong sense of social responsibility.

The quality of teaching pupils receive is good overall, with some highly effective lessons generating a fast pace of learning. Pupils' attainment rises systematically and, by the end of Year 6, is above average. Most pupils read, write and use numbers well and transfer to high school well equipped for the rigours of secondary education.

Well-planned school initiatives are increasing pupils' contribution to and ownership over their own learning but pupils are not given enough opportunity to assess and evaluate how well they are doing in lessons for themselves.

While the school's procedures for safeguarding are satisfactory and most parents and carers have confidence in the school to keep their children safe, not all of the administrative and site monitoring procedures are equally rigorous. As a result, the school is not always clear about what improvements are necessary. The support the school provides for pupils who may be experiencing difficulties in their lives is extensive and very effective, enabling them to get the best from their education. Pupils who arrive from various parts of the world, often speaking little or no English, receive sensitive support both from staff and other pupils and rapidly become an integral part of the school.

The headteacher, supported by a team of conscientious and enthusiastic senior staff, has made a number of strategic changes since the last inspection, which have sharpened the school's focus on raising pupils' achievements considerably. As a result, standards of attainment have risen and there has been good improvement in many key areas, including the quality of teaching. Thorough monitoring provides extensive and detailed information about the school's performance. At times, analysis of this information lacks refinement, so that the key messages it contains are not as easy to see as they might be. Despite this, performance data is used well by staff and members of the governing body to plan the next steps in the school's development and to ensure that it continues to move forward at pace. All factors considered, the school's capacity for sustained improvement is good.

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## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase pupils' independence by providing them with more opportunities to assess and evaluate the progress they are making in lessons for themselves.
- Refine the manner in which performance data is analysed to make the key information it contains easier to access.
- Ensure that all safeguarding administrative and monitoring procedures are equally rigorous.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**2**

Pupils achieve well and acquire knowledge, skills and understanding at a good pace. Most pupils show very positive attitudes to school, enjoy learning new things and work hard to meet the challenging targets teachers set. They listen carefully to teachers and generally stay on task until the work they are given is complete, although some year groups are easier to motivate than others. Pupils from a wide range of cultural backgrounds work very well together, sharing ideas and discussing what they are doing sensibly and constructively. Pupils in both key stages read confidently and accurately and solve mathematical problems competently. While the quality of pupils' writing is better for their age in Key Stage 2 than in Key Stage 1, the measures the school has put in place are having the desired effect and the gap is closing.

The dip in attainment which occurred after the last inspection has quickly been corrected and, at the end of Year 6, standards of attainment are above the national average. Well-structured support enables pupils who speak English as an additional language, including those who are new to English, to make good gains in language acquisition. They, rapidly, gain confidence in their new language and, before very long, are communicating happily and effectively with all around them. Support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is equally effective and they make good progress towards their individual targets. Careful consideration is given to the needs of Gypsy/Roma pupils and they achieve well in response to the help and guidance provided. Pupils who join the school part way through their primary education settle quickly and, before very long, are making the same good progress as their peers.

Most pupils feel that they are safe in school and given good advice about the dangers they may encounter in their everyday lives. A few express a little concern about site security but have confidence in staff to look after them. Growing produce on the school allotment helps pupils to develop a good awareness of what constitutes healthy eating and many engage readily in physical activities to help them keep fit. Pupils of all ages show a strong sense of responsibility and willingly help others, both in school and in the community at large. While levels of attendance levels are influenced by social and cultural factors, most pupils attend regularly and arrive punctually. This attendance, combined with the good literacy, numeracy and other basic skills and regular opportunities to engage in commercial and enterprise schemes, provides pupils with a solid foundation for future learning and life. The respect pupils show for the culture and

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beliefs of their peers is exemplary and their appreciation of moral issues such as caring for the environment is extremely well developed. Older pupils, in particular, show a very mature understanding of how to approach and eliminate disputes, putting forward their thoughts and opinions in a highly constructive and non-confrontational way.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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

## How effective is the provision?

Lesson quality is a little variable but at least satisfactory and, on occasions, outstanding. At its best, the teaching is innovative and challenging, grabbing pupils' attention and giving them a thirst for learning. Teachers use of assessment has improved substantially since the last inspection and work is often matched well to pupils' differing needs. Very occasionally, the tasks set for the different ability groups do not provide the correct amount of challenge or do not link well enough to previous work. Pupils are set clear personal targets to help them improve, which they understand and use well. While the fast pace of many lessons helps maintain pupils' interest, opportunities for pupils to check how well they are meeting the success criteria teachers share at the start of the lesson are often quite limited. Teaching assistants work closely with class teachers and

<sup>1</sup> 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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provide good support for pupils, particularly those who experience difficulties learning or are quite to new to English. Pupils' work is marked thoroughly and constructively, with teachers using humour occasionally to emphasise what has been done well and where improvements could be made.

Curriculum development is on-going and, while the school has still to complete the move to a fully creative and inter-linked programme, good progress has been made and pupils enjoy a varied and stimulating range of learning opportunities. Frequent use is made of the local environment and much value is placed on the school's central position in the historic city. Regular opportunities to read, write and apply mathematics in different contexts ensure that pupils' literacy and numeracy skills develop securely. Pupils' oracy, quite often, lags behind their other literacy skills, but the emphasis the school is placing on this aspect of pupils' learning is beginning to improve matters. The school provides pupils with a good range of extra-curricular activities, which are well attended and much appreciated. The arts feature strongly, both in and out of lessons, adding much to pupils' cultural experiences.

Staff care for, support and guide all pupils well and a strong sense of harmony and well-being prevails. The support provided for pupils who need additional pastoral care is very good and has a very positive effect on their attitude to school and life in general. Links with different agencies are well established, enabling the school to call on additional support for children and their families quickly, as and when it is needed. Procedures for ensuring pupils are educated in a safe and secure environment are satisfactory but not as well honed in some areas as others. Well established strategies, often including peer support, ensure pupils joining the school part way through their primary education receive a warm welcome. Transition and induction arrangements are planned well and pupils transfer smoothly from one stage of their education to the next.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The headteacher utilises the skills of her senior leaders well, enabling them to make decisions and take actions, while keeping a strategic overview of everything that is taking place. Staff feel valued and comment on the 'close, caring and thoughtful community' that leaders and managers promote. Members of the governing body have a high profile around school. They support its development conscientiously and check how well it is meeting the needs of the pupils carefully. Detailed assessment and careful

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tracking provides senior staff with a clear picture of the progress individual and different groups of pupils are making. This information is acted upon decisively to ensure that all pupils have equal opportunities to learn and none are discriminated against. While safeguarding is satisfactory overall and has some good features, particularly with regard to pupils experiencing considerable difficulties, some administrative and checking procedures are not as well organised as they could be. The school works closely with many external organisations, including the local authority, and these links have a very positive effect on pupils' achievement and personal development. Senior staff and members of the governing body have worked hard to improve links with parents and carers and all parties are now benefiting. The school understands the needs of the diverse community it serves well and involves itself readily in local initiatives. Links are established with schools abroad and plans laid to ensure mutual benefits accrue. Steps are being taken to establish similar partnerships with different communities in the United Kingdom.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

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

## **Early Years Foundation Stage**

While the majority of children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with levels of knowledge and skills that are typical for their age, a significant proportion are some way behind in their language skills and personal and social development and a growing number are new to English. Because they are taught well, boys and girls, children who speak English as an additional language, those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and children of higher ability levels make equally good progress. By



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the end of their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage, most children have achieved the targets for their age in the different areas of learning and those who were behind their peers when they first joined the school have caught up well. At times, the teaching is outstanding and staff are very adept at linking opportunities for learning to the children's own cultures and current events. Boys, in particular, are finding the current emphasis on the World Cup particularly stimulating and everyone is enjoying the Polish snack table. Adults pay careful attention to children's welfare and care for them well. Staff are very aware of those who need support because of rapidly changing domestic circumstances and keep a very careful watch over them. Regular and thorough assessments enable staff to accurately identify gaps in children's learning and to plan accordingly. Parents and carers are encouraged to contribute to their children's 'Something to Smile About' record books, helping to secure good links between school and home. Leadership and management are effective and promote a good rate of improvement. The need to improve provision in the outside area has been recognised and is being acted upon productively.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
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**

With few exceptions, the parents and carers who returned the pre-inspection questionnaires or spoke to inspectors expressed very positive views of the school and are happy with the experiences their children receive. 'The school has a great atmosphere and all staff are friendly and welcoming,' is typical of the comments they made to inspectors. Several remarked on the good start their children are given in the Early Years Foundation Stage and the improvements they have seen in the school of late. A minority of parents and carers expressed concerns about the school's ability to deal with unacceptable behaviour. A small minority of pupils exhibit challenging behaviour but these are, mostly, dealt with effectively and a specific problem to which some parents and carers have referred has very recently been fully resolved. A number of parents and carers would like more information about their children's progress. Inspectors judged the school's links with parents and carers to be generally good but staff and members of the governing body are looking carefully at ways in which communication can be improved.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St George's Roman Catholic Primary School, York 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 61 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 200 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	40	63	20	32	2	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	43	68	17	27	1	2	2	3
The school informs me about my child's progress	30	48	25	40	4	6	3	5
My child is making enough progress at this school	30	48	25	40	4	6	2	3
The teaching is good at this school	34	54	22	35	3	5	1	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	30	48	27	43	3	5	1	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	35	56	25	40	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)	31	49	28	44	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	31	49	22	35	4	6	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	29	46	23	37	4	6	4	6
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	28	44	23	37	4	6	3	5
The school is led and managed effectively	38	60	19	30	4	6	2	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	37	59	22	35	1	2	2	3

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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
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.**



5 July 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St George's Roman Catholic Primary School, York, YO10 4BT

Thank you very much for the very friendly greeting you gave the inspectors when we visited your school recently. Lots of you smiled and talked to us, which made us feel comfortable and welcome. We, thoroughly, enjoyed finding out about the work you do and special thanks go to those who talked with us about the school.

Yours is a good school and we understand fully why you enjoy it so much. There is a lovely atmosphere and we were delighted by how well you all get along. Most of you work hard in lessons and take a pride in what you achieve. This positive attitude to learning does you a great deal of credit. Your behaviour is good and you can be very proud of the way you grow into sensible, responsible and caring young people.

The progress you make is good because you are taught well and respond with enthusiasm to the interesting tasks teachers set. We enjoyed reading what you had written in your workbooks because the work was presented well and we could see that you were learning a great deal. It was encouraging to hear you talk so knowledgeably about your targets and how you work towards them. What you need to learn next is how to judge for yourselves how well you are doing in each lesson and we have explained this to your teachers. This is a skill we call 'continual self assessment' and you will find it comes in very handy in all sorts of different situations.

Staff take good care of you and we know you appreciate all the help, support and guidance they provide. While we are happy that you are safe in school, a few pupils mentioned some things that gave them a little concern. We have asked the school and the governors to do a few more checks, just to make sure everything is as good as it can be. We have also made a suggestion about the information senior teachers collect about the school to help them when they are using it. Thank you once again for a very enjoyable two days and best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mr Keith Bardon

Lead Inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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