

St George's RC Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102038
Local Authority	Enfield
Inspection number	307880
Inspection date	27 September 2007
Reporting inspector	Glynis Bradley-Peat

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	619
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Michael Blundell
Headteacher	Mrs Patricia Alder
Date of previous school inspection	15 September 2003
School address	Gordon Road
	Enfield
	EN2 0QA
Telephone number	020 8363 3729
Fax number	020 8367 2275

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

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

- What are the reasons for the reduced percentages of the highest levels in English, mathematics and science in the latest national tests?
- What impact has the school had on raising standards in writing?
- What impact are leaders having on raising standards for more able pupils, especially in mathematics?
- Do pupils know their targets and what they need to do to improve their work?

Evidence was gathered from, analysis of pupils' work, analysis of school documentation, observation of lessons, conversations with learners, discussions with teachers and senior staff. Other aspects of the school's work were not inspected in detail, but the inspector 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

This heavily over-subscribed primary school serves a relatively advantaged area and is much larger than average. A much lower than average proportion of pupils is eligible for free school meals. Most pupils are White British. The proportions from minority ethnic backgrounds are higher than average, however, the percentage of these learning English as an additional language are very low. The number identified with learning difficulties and those with a statement of educational need are low. The school has Investors in People, Healthy Schools status and the Active Mark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This highly popular school benefits from the great support given to it by both parents and the local community. Many parents 'believe that St George's is an outstanding school.' and the inspector's conversations with parents and analysis of the Ofsted questionnaires suggest that this is most definitely the case. Quite rightly so, the school prides itself on a variety of achievements both academically and socially and continually strives for excellence at every turn.

Pupils are confident, articulate, mature individuals who work very hard and demonstrate high standards of behaviour. They engaged the inspector in fascinating conversation and delightedly spoke about their many achievements both in and out of school. Because of the excellent curriculum, pupils are given a multitude of opportunities to blossom and cultivate their talents. They spoke eagerly about their history of winning many competitions and were proud of their victories in cricket and football when playing against other schools. Many of them excel in music and, with the dedication of teachers, pass high-level external examinations. A highly influential school council has helped ensure that girls can now wear trousers. It has also helped raise money for various purposes to further improve the school environment. The pupils have devised a reward system for those children who walk at least ten minutes to school each week. One excitedly said, 'You can take the car half-way and still tick off that you're walking on the chart!' Such events as the 'French Day' enable pupils to work in a cross-curricular way. They learn French, change pounds to Euros, learn about other cultures, use information and communication technology (ICT) and thoroughly enjoy their learning.

When starting school, pupils' skills and levels of understanding are in line with those usually expected, but because teaching is excellent they make outstanding progress. This explains why the school has a track record of pupils reaching high standards in the national tests. Learners meet highly challenging targets. However, in the 2007 tests at the end of Year 6, there was a dip in the percentage of pupils who achieved the highest level of attainment. Why was this? Because the year group as a whole had fewer higher attaining pupils than usual. This is evidenced by the lower attainment found by the Inspector at the end of Y2 for the same group of pupils, especially in writing and mathematics. Consequently, a high number of them narrowly missed out on achieving level 5, the highest result possible. The school has new targets for next summer's tests and inspection evidence shows these to be not only challenging, but realistic too. Evidence gathered during the inspection shows that current standards in Year 6 this year are higher than ever. The school has worked long and hard to improve writing and this is paying great dividends. The impact of the school's actions are clear for all to see. Standards are being effectively raised because teachers skilfully model writing well and make the learning interesting by organising fun activities such as 'role play'. This results in high quality pieces of writing as seen in Y2 during the inspection. The pupils could hardly contain themselves when asked to read their pieces to each other during their 'partnered talk' session! Mathematics is also benefiting from an 'investigational approach' which enables pupils to think more deeply and develop strategies to solve problems effectively. Electronic whiteboards have been installed in most classrooms, but these are not yet being used consistently to enhance learning in lessons. Some boards are experiencing technical problems and some teachers lack the confidence to use them effectively.

The provision for care, guidance and support is outstanding with assessment and academic guidance being a real strength. Pupils are cared for well. They emphatically stated that they

knew who to go to if they had any problems and were confident that their worries would be effectively dealt with. Although very simple, the tracking system used by the school is an example of a very effective way of monitoring pupils' progress. Teachers are able to use this data to keep a close eye on each and every pupil in their class. Any underachievement is identified early on and support put in place to help those pupils who need it. Those with learning difficulties are catered for well and, in the words of one parent, 'In infants, much effort was put into areas where my child was struggling ... He is now a confident reader and wants to write.' 'Tiger Targets' displayed in Key Stage 1 motivate the pupils well. They know their targets and also what they need to do to achieve them. Older pupils were happy to discuss marking systems and explained in earnest how their teachers write helpful comments in their books to suggest how they might make improvements to their work so that they can achieve their learning objectives.

Although the school knows itself very well and self-evaluation is highly effective, it took too modest a view about its own achievements because of the high expectations it has of its staff and pupils and its unremitting drive for excellence. In the words of the headteacher, 'I didn't like to put outstanding because it looks like you've got no more to do, but there's always more to do!' Managers at all levels function very well together as one driving force for improvement. They are enthusiastic, competent and highly dedicated to their work, and it shows. Governors too are very knowledgeable and make no excuses for asking difficult questions of the school when necessary. However, they are also adept at supporting the school and helping it to move forward. The track record of improvement over the last five years is outstanding, demonstrated by the pupils' progress and achievement in all areas. In light of this there is excellent capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children make an excellent start in the Reception classes. They enter school with the expected level of skills for their age. They achieve well and by the end of Reception most are meeting or working above the Early Learning Goals. Already, children who have only been in school a week have settled well and behave as if they have been there for much longer. Classroom routines are already established. For example, children were seen happily and confidently taking the register to the office. Because of the excellent curriculum and overall provision, children are able to make sensible choices from the wide range of activities offered. As a result, children make excellent progress right from the start. Teachers are very well prepared and make sure that they provide challenge for every child, as a result teaching is consistently good or better.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that teachers are trained effectively in the use of electronic whiteboards.

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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?	1
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 effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

Personal development and well-being

How good is 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
How well 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 the learners' needs?	1
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?	1

¹ Grade 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.

Annex A**Leadership and management**

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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**

4 October 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St George's RC Primary School, Enfield, EN2 0QA

What a super day I spent in your school recently. I thoroughly enjoyed it. How nice it was to watch you hard at work but really having a good time. You told me many things about your school which were very useful when it came to writing my report. Thank you for that too. I was pleased to hear how many of you do so very well in competitions against other schools especially in football and cricket. Some of you are excellent at music, take complicated exams, and pass them all. Very well done! Your school council also does an excellent job and I was particularly impressed by the way you had organised a reward system to encourage children to walk to school more. We inspectors should try this too!

Whilst I was at your school I found out that you achieve very well in national tests and that you have done this regularly over a number of years. You should be very proud of yourselves. Not only is this thanks to your hard work, but it is because your teachers teach you really well and expect much of each and every one of you. Your headteacher and her deputy also do a great job and have your success uppermost in their minds. They are always looking for ways to help you achieve even more than you do already. This is why I think that your school is outstanding. (That means it always does what it can to ensure you all do as well as possible).

Even the best schools are not perfect. Yours is close, but it still has things it would like to do better. I have asked your headteacher to make sure that the lovely interactive whiteboards in your classrooms are used more regularly by all the teachers. Also, that any problems with the boards are put right.

Once again, thank you for being so polite, well behaved and helpful when I came to see you and I wish you all success in the future.

Kind regards

Glynis Bradley-Peat

Lead inspector