

St George's Church of England Primary School, Great Bromley

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115085
Local Authority	Essex
Inspection number	379001
Inspection dates	17–18 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Cheryl Thompson

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	111
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nigel Rowe
Headteacher	Julie O'Mara
Date of previous school inspection	27 November 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They observed eight lessons taught by four teachers. The work of teaching assistants supporting small groups of pupils and individuals was also observed. Meetings were held with staff, members of the governing body and groups of pupils. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at school evaluation documents, data on pupils' progress, external monitoring reports and development planning. Responses from questionnaires completed by 78 parents and carers were analysed, as well as those from pupils and staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How well are children learning early literacy skills in their Reception year?
- To what extent do pupils make better progress in Years 1 and 2 than in the rest of the year groups?
- How effective are the school's plans for improving pupils' progress as they move through the school?

Information about the school

This is a smaller-than-average school serving its local area. All pupils are of White British heritage. There is a below-average proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. Pupils are taught in four mixed-age classes, with children in the Early Years Foundation Stage taught alongside some pupils from Year 1.

Since the last inspection, the headteacher who had been in post for 25 years has retired and a new headteacher took over the school in September 2011.

The school has achieved National Healthy School status, the Activemark for high-quality physical education provision and the Eco silver award.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

This school provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. It has strengths in its provision for pupils' personal development.

- Pupils' attainment is broadly average. Their progress is satisfactory overall. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar progress to their peers.
- Pupils say they enjoy school, like their teachers and the range of school clubs and, especially, the visits to the nearby secondary school.
- Pupils make a good contribution to the school and local community. All Year 6 pupils have a 'job' and are very keen to take on responsibility.
- Behaviour is good. In lessons where the pace is brisk and the interest level high, behaviour is outstanding.
- Teaching is satisfactory. Teaching quality varies across the school because teachers are not always making the best use of their assessments to plan work to challenge all pupils, especially those who attain the higher levels.
- The school's capacity for sustained improvement is satisfactory. The headteacher has already developed a very clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the school's provision. Monitoring undertaken by other leaders is not yet sufficiently rigorous and regular to have a positive impact on pupils' progress.
- The governing body is supportive of the school but does not always hold leaders and managers fully to account for improving outcomes for pupils.
- Links with parents and carers are good. These good links help parents and carers play an important role in such areas as hearing their children read at home.
- Provision for children in the Reception year is satisfactory but the current methods used for teaching early literacy and numeracy skills are not leading to optimum progress and children spend too long sitting on the carpet when they should be actively participating in tasks, individually and in groups.

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- Good systems identify groups or individuals whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. The headteacher makes sure pupils receive good, sensitive support and encouragement.
- Pupils are known very well so any unhappiness or uncharacteristic behaviour is noted quickly and something done about it. Pupils are very confident that they are safe at school and have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, fit and healthy.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching to a consistently good quality in order to increase pupils' rate of progress and raise attainment by:
 - making more precise use of assessment information to set aspirational targets for pupils and to plan lessons to meet the needs of pupils of all abilities
 - checking on pupils' understanding during lessons so teachers can challenge or underpin learning
 - deploying teaching assistants to make optimum use of their time
 - implementing a programme of rigorous and regular monitoring of lessons and using the outcomes to provide support or training for individual teachers.
- Improve the provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage to increase their rate of progress, especially in using early literacy and numeracy skills by:
 - providing training for staff in up-to-date methodology
 - using accurate assessments of children's learning to provide challenging activities to extend learning further
 - making sure children spend more time on practical learning activities.
- Develop the roles of middle leaders to enable them to contribute effectively to school self-evaluation and improvement planning by:
 - providing them with training to develop their monitoring and evaluation skills
 - providing them with time to monitor their areas of responsibility
 - using outcomes of monitoring to identify priorities for improvement
 - providing them with support and holding them to account for timely improvements.

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Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Attainment on entry to the Reception year varies from year to year but it is generally around that expected for children's ages. School data indicate that pupils' rate of progress varies from class to class but is consistently good in Years 5 and 6. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress as they move from Year 2 to Year 6. The school has satisfactory systems to support their learning. Teaching assistants provide some effective support for these pupils in lessons ensuring they are working with appropriate materials and at the right complexity level for their needs. Like the other pupils, their progress is good when the quality of teaching they experience is good or outstanding. Pupils enjoy learning and demonstrate this with their high level of attendance. Their enjoyment was very evident in an outstanding science lesson for Years 5 and 6. Detailed organisation ensured pupils' enthusiastic and safe participation in experiments, heating such things as jelly cubes and marshmallows. Excellent questioning helped pupils of all abilities to consolidate their learning and then extend it further. Discussions with these pupils and scrutiny of their science books indicate that, for their age, they have high levels of understanding of how to conduct fair tests, the reasons for recording their findings and how to do this exceptionally well. More generally, the pace of lessons is slower and pupils make satisfactory progress, and teachers' planning is less detailed in their expectations of pupils of differing abilities; opportunities are missed to extend learning, especially for higher-attaining pupils.

Older pupils enjoy taking on a wide range of responsibilities around the school and take local issues seriously, for example, in their efforts to encourage motorists to slow their speed near the school entrance. They show a strong ability to reflect about issues such as sustainability and the similarities and differences between their own lives and those of the pupils in the Ghanaian school with which the school has links. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations and what constitutes a healthy diet. One pupil, for example, explained that they should eat, 'not too much of anything'. Pupils know how to keep themselves fit and many take part in a range of clubs and competitive sports. They have very well-developed social skills, good manners and a good knowledge of right from wrong and a reasonable understanding of cultures other than their own.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3

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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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	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching, while satisfactory, varies too much to ensure pupils make consistently good progress. For Years 5 and 6, lesson planning is very closely matched to what pupils of all abilities need to learn next. These lessons demonstrate brisk pace and excellent questioning to check whether pupils need further explanations or can move on. Pupils are in no doubt as to what is expected of them. In other year groups, however, pace is often slower and expectations not always high enough. Teaching assistants are not always deployed effectively at the start of lessons. Lesson planning does not always identify what pupils of different abilities are expected to learn. Consequently pupils, and especially higher-attaining pupils, are not always presented with the right level of challenge.

The curriculum is broad and balanced with good opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of how to keep themselves safe, fit and healthy. Currently, the curriculum is not always meeting the needs of the more able pupils in the school. A good range of clubs enriches the curriculum well. Relationships within the school are good and teachers manage their pupils well. The care, guidance and support of groups or individuals whose circumstances may make them vulnerable are good. These pupils receive good, sensitive support and encouragement to ensure good self-esteem and confident participation in all school activities. Teachers always mark pupils' work. They provide encouraging comments but are not routinely ensuring pupils know what they have to do to improve their work, or providing them with time to do so.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

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How effective are leadership and management?

In a short time, the headteacher has established an incisive understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement in the school’s provision. School improvement planning is being adapted as a result. When observing lessons alongside inspectors, the headteacher demonstrated an astute awareness of where improvements were needed and could detail ways of achieving these. She has high aspirations for the school’s future, building on the school’s existing good reputation. Teachers with subject or Early Years Foundation Stage leadership responsibilities have had limited opportunities to undertake rigorous and regular monitoring. They do not have a clear picture of pupils’ progress across the school. As a consequence, parts of the school improvement plan do not address weaknesses in provision and subject leaders are not using their good subject knowledge to support their colleagues as well as they might.

A number of effective partnerships have a significant impact on pupils’ aspirations, enjoyment and good sporting achievements. For example, links with the nearby secondary school to use Bunsen burners for a range of experiments had a significant impact on pupils’ enthusiasm for science. Links with a grammar school to enhance mathematics provision for higher-attaining pupils has raised older pupils’ aspirations of working hard to achieve high standards. Links with groups of schools are effective in such areas as helping staff check that their assessments of pupils’ work are correct. The school has good links with parents and carers, which are evident in pupils’ high attendance rate and the help provided with homework and reading. The headteacher has managed the change in the school’s leadership very sensitively and consulted with parents so that they understand and feel part of the recent changes. The overwhelming majority of parents and carers feel that the school is led and managed effectively. The school tackles discrimination robustly and equality of opportunity is promoted satisfactorily. The school’s promotion of community cohesion is good. This is supported by strong links with the local community as well as with a school in Ghana.

Members of the governing body are proud and very supportive of the school. They does not yet use all the available indicators to check that the school is meeting all its ambitions and targets so that they can hold leaders and managers fully to account. They have a good understanding of safeguarding requirements. Consequently, the school’s safeguarding procedures are good, updated regularly and known by all.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities	3

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met	
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	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enjoy coming to school, settle well and have positive attitudes to the activities they undertake. Their levels of knowledge, skills and understanding are wide ranging and broadly typical for their age. Most talk at length about what they are doing and have well-developed vocabularies. The majority of children make satisfactory progress in developing and using their knowledge of letter sounds. Almost all are using them to sound out simple words to help them read. However, there are shortcomings in the teaching of how to use letter sounds to spell. Consequently, children are not making as much progress in spelling simple words as they might. In sessions observed, teaching and children's progress were satisfactory rather than good because children spent far too long sitting on the carpet and did not have enough time for practical activities to consolidate and/or take their learning further. Many of the planned activities missed opportunities to extend the learning of the highest-attaining children. Teaching assistants are deployed satisfactorily to ensure the two year-groups within the class are provided with appropriate work and opportunities for learning. There have been insufficient opportunities for the leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage to undertake formal monitoring to provide a clear overview of the provision. Nevertheless, staff work well together and children are cared for effectively. Parents and carers are welcomed warmly into school. They are helped and encouraged to contribute to their children's learning.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

There was a well-above-average rate of questionnaire returns. The overwhelming

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majority of parents and carers are happy with their child's experience at St. George's and all agree that children are kept safe. A very small minority of parents and carers felt that the school does not deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour and that they are not helped to support their child's learning. The inspection finds that effective links with parents and carers support learning well. The school has a clear policy for dealing with unacceptable behaviour which all staff follow. Pupils of all ages state that they feel safe in school and, should they have any concerns, are confident any adult will 'sort things out' for them.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St George's Church of England Primary School, Great Bromley 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 78 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 111 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	57	73	20	26	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	63	81	15	19	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	47	60	29	37	2	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	46	59	30	38	2	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	55	71	20	26	2	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	51	65	24	31	3	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	49	63	29	37	0	0	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)	50	64	27	35	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	51	65	26	33	0	0	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	46	59	28	36	3	4	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	41	53	32	41	1	1	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	48	62	27	35	2	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	58	74	18	23	2	3	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 all 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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 are for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 pupils' 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.



21 November 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St George's Church of England Primary School, Great Bromley, Colchester, CO7 7HX

Thank you all for welcoming me to your school and for sharing your thoughts and ideas about it. This helped to make the judgements about your school, which is providing you with a satisfactory education. These are the things that were the best:

- you enjoy school and feel happy and safe
- your behaviour is good and you work and play together well
- you are well looked after, particularly those of you who have particular needs
- you make a good contribution to your school and local community.

There are some key areas where the school can improve. I have asked your headteacher, senior leaders and governors to:

- make sure that teaching is always at least good, and that your teachers always plan work to make you think hard so you make even better progress from your start in school to Year 6
- make sure that the teachers for the Early Years Foundation Stage know how to teach letter sounds in a way that helps the children make good progress especially in spelling
- make sure that all the leaders in the school have a good idea of how well you are doing so that they can plan further improvements.

You already make a good contribution to the life of the school. You are positive about learning and I was impressed with your good manners and how welcoming you are to visitors. You can help the school improve by continuing to work hard.

Thank you again for your help. I hope you make a lot of money with your games at the Christmas Fayre and that 'Joseph' is a great success.

Yours sincerely

Cheryl Thompson
Lead inspector

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