

St George's Catholic Primary School

Eagle Way, Shoeburyness, Southend-on-Sea, SS3 9RN

Inspection dates 27–28 March 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher provides strong leadership that is firmly focused on improving the life chances of the pupils in the school's care.
- Most pupils are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teaching is rarely less than good and some is outstanding. Teachers expect the best from their pupils. They provide challenging work for pupils of all abilities, including the most able.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage receive very effective help and soon gain confidence, becoming keen, motivated learners.
- Good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development permeates the whole school, underpinning the pupils' good behaviour and positive attitudes.
- Pupils behave well. They are very well mannered, caring and considerate.
- Excellent arrangements to promote pupils' welfare mean they feel extremely safe and well cared for. Almost all their parents agree.
- Governors are skilled, knowledgeable and know the school extremely well. They provide high levels of support and challenge, ensuring that teaching and achievement continue to improve rapidly.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not all teachers make good use of questioning to encourage pupils to share their ideas.
- Some pupils make slower progress than others because they do not receive good guidance through marking on how to improve.
- The organisation and responsibilities of the senior leadership team are changing, and the precise roles of those other than the headteacher, assistant headteacher and special educational needs coordinator have not yet been clearly established.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 11 lessons and parts of lessons, including four which were observed jointly with the headteacher. Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at break time and at lunchtime, both inside the school and in the playground. They listened to a sample of pupils read from Years 2 and 3.
- Inspectors observed the school at work, visited assemblies and looked at a wide range of documentation, including: the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan; pupils' workbooks; external moderators' reports of assessment; documents relating to the management of teachers' performance; plans for supporting disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs; and minutes of the meetings of the governing body. They also reviewed the standards pupils have achieved over time and the school's information about pupils' current progress.
- Discussions were held with a group of pupils from Key Stage 2, members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority, the headteacher, other school leaders and members of staff.
- Inspectors took account of 25 staff questionnaires.
- There were 57 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), which the inspectors took into account. They also spoke to a number of parents and considered the correspondence received from parents commenting about the school.

Inspection team

Terrance Mortimer, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Deborah Whittle

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school.
- The vast majority of the pupils are White British and there is a very small minority of pupils from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is well below the national average. This is extra government funding for particular groups, including pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is well below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality of teaching, so that all pupils make more rapid progress, by:
 - developing teachers' skills in questioning so that pupils benefit from sharing their ideas with their classmates
 - making sure that all marking is as good as the best in offering helpful guidance to pupils about how to improve their work.
- Improve the effectiveness of the senior leadership team by agreeing and establishing clear roles and responsibilities for the new members of the team.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and knowledge that are typical for their age, though slightly lower in language, number and knowledge of the world. The exciting range of opportunities they are given to play, explore and to use their imaginations means that nearly every child develops at a good pace and so is ready for the move up to Year 1. Children's listening and concentration skills, for example, are particularly well developed.
- Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1. At the end of Year 2, above-average proportions of pupils reach and exceed Level 2 in reading, writing and mathematics. Achievement in reading for all groups of pupils is especially strong. In the 2013 national screening check in phonics (letters and the sounds they make), pupils in Year 1 achieved above the national average. Pupils who find reading difficult say they enjoy reading at home and school.
- Good progress continues through Key Stage 2. In the national assessments in 2013 at the end of Year 6, an above-average proportion of pupils attained the higher Level 5 in mathematics, reading and writing; more than half of the pupils did so in the mathematics and grammar assessments. This illustrates that the most-able pupils achieve well. School data and inspection evidence show that pupils currently in Key Stage 2 are on track to at least maintain these standards.
- Achievement in mathematics has been good for some time, but leaders had accurately identified a relative weakness in pupils' problem-solving skills. Similarly, although pupils' mathematical skills are good, they do not consolidate them by using them to support work in other subjects in the same way that they use their literacy skills across the curriculum. A recent focus on these areas has been successful, and is improving pupils' skills further.
- School data and inspection evidence show that the small number of pupils supported through the pupil premium achieve well. This shows that the school uses the pupil premium to good effect and demonstrates that its efforts to promote equality of opportunity and tackle discrimination are effective. There were too few such pupils in Year 6 last year to comment on their attainment without risk of identifying individual pupils.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, and the small number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, make good progress from their individual starting points in mathematics because they receive support that closely matches their needs. The progress of these pupils in reading and writing is now reaching the same levels as in mathematics.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good overall with some that is outstanding. As a result, pupils achieve well. Work in pupils' books displays clear progress, showing that teaching has improved over time. The vast majority of parents and pupils say that teaching is good.
- In the Reception class, children make good progress because they benefit from effective teaching and well-planned activities. There is a strong emphasis on developing childrens' language skills, extending their vocabulary and reinforcing their understanding of phonics. For example, in a lesson to develop their language skills, children were making pirate ships and seeking treasure, with staff asking questions that gave the children opportunities to remember words they had learned.

- The teaching of phonics is good in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. Staff build on the good start children in Reception are given when developing early language skills. This focus also contributes to the improvement in pupils' reading and writing.
- All teachers expect the best from their pupils, and pupils of all abilities are stretched and challenged in their learning – including the most able. This was seen, for example, in a Year 6 English lesson, where pupils used persuasive language to create a short story around a series of problems set by the teacher to challenge their learning.
- A focus of the school is the improvement in the use of mathematics skills across the curriculum, because this has previously not been as well developed in different subjects as their literacy and communication skills.
- Teachers have a clear understanding of what pupils already know and can do and what they have or have not grasped in lessons. They use this information effectively in their planning to help pupils build on their existing understanding. Teachers plan lessons that motivate and engage pupils in their learning. As a result, pupils enjoy lessons, have positive attitudes to learning and are keen to do well. Pupils say, 'Teachers make lessons fun and make it easy to learn.'
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well promoted by staff to create a positive learning atmosphere. Teachers successfully encourage qualities such as cooperation, respect for others and reflection. This supports good relationships and makes for effective behaviour management and calm classrooms which are encouraging places to learn.
- Classrooms are well organised, with displays and resources that support learning well. For example, some classrooms feature a 'learning wall', which displays prompts and reminders that pupils successfully use as a reference point during their lessons.
- There is good use of additional support to help pupils who are at risk of falling behind in their learning. Pupils are confident that they can ask for help when they need it. Homework is regularly set. This all helps in maintaining progress for all.
- When teachers are working with individuals and small groups of pupils, they use questioning well to check understanding and move learning on. However, when questions are asked of the whole class, some pupils lose their motivation as they are not able to share their ideas. This, in turn, slows the rate of their learning down.
- Marking across the school varies in quality. It is often better in English than in mathematics. The best written feedback gives pupils very clear guidance that is extremely helpful and is valued by them. Pupils then take the teachers' advice on board and move their learning on. However, teachers do not all ensure that pupils act on the feedback they are given. Other marking is much too brief and, typically, includes only short comments that are of limited value to pupils in supporting their progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are proud of their school and greatly enjoy learning within the exceptionally caring environment created by the headteacher and staff. There is a very calm, orderly and atmosphere where all feel included.

- Behaviour in and outside lessons is good. Pupils are polite and treat each other in a caring way. This was seen in the dining room, where older pupils were helping younger pupils with their lunches.
- A tremendous respect for each other and for adults in school is shown by the pupils. They form positive relationships so feel happy and enjoy being in school. A comment from pupils reflects how pupils feel, 'Everyone is welcome here. Teachers like to help you.' This is a positive example of how well the school promotes the elimination of discrimination.
- Pupils take their roles as school councillors, buddies and sports councillors seriously. Opportunities to take on such responsibilities provide purposeful ways to extend pupils' moral and social development.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils say that they feel extremely safe in school due to the excellent care and attention they receive from all the adults in school. They know how to keep themselves safe in different situations, including using the internet.
- Pupils say that they are confident to seek help, should they need it, from any adult in school. Parents and staff strongly support the fact that pupils are safe in school.
- All staff have received the relevant child protection training and the governors have been supporting the school in working with the pupils and their parents in recognising, understanding and protecting the pupils against abuse.
- Pupils, in discussions with inspectors, demonstrated a secure understanding of what is meant by bullying, and this included name-calling and physical threats. They said there were no bullying or racist comments in school.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is built into every lesson. As a consequence, pupils know the difference between right and wrong and have a good understanding of cultures other than their own and how to support each other. A comment from a parent supports this view, 'This school has boosted my son's confidence and we have watched him grow, mostly thanks to this school and staff beliefs.'
- Attendance has been maintained at above average for the past three years. Punctuality is good.
- The breakfast club has a positive impact on pupils' learning. It provides a healthy breakfast and opportunities for pupils to socialise with their friends and take part in interesting activities.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has a clear vision for the school's future. The quality of leadership and management including, the governance, is good and is evidenced by the improved achievement and progress that pupils have made since the last inspection.
- The headteacher has been working under challenging circumstances of senior leadership changes, due to long-term absences. Nevertheless, the headteacher's very effective management and leadership of the school have established high staff morale and a shared commitment to continuous improvement. Her strong leadership has been the driving force in the improvements since the last inspection. She has an accurate view of the school's performance,

knows its strengths and what needs to be done to improve the school further.

- Parents who spoke to the inspectors were all positive about the school. Typical comments were, 'We are happy with the education our children receive,' and 'This is an inclusive and welcoming school. We cannot speak highly enough about the headteacher and staff and the support given to our children.' The overwhelming majority of parents say they would recommend this school to others.
- The monitoring of teaching and pupils' progress is good. The progress of pupils who are at risk of falling behind, including those with complex learning needs or behavioural difficulties, is carefully monitored. The headteacher holds regular assessment meetings with teachers so that support can be put in place quickly for any pupils who are underachieving.
- Due to staffing changes, the leadership roles are changing. The distribution of responsibilities and the new members' roles on the senior leadership team are still not established. The work of the team is, therefore, at present too reliant on a few people, and this can limit the pace of improvements. Despite this, the headteacher and the assistant headteacher have maintained good monitoring and drive for improvement. They enthusiastically check the quality of teaching, offering advice to teachers and generally promoting the school's ambition for excellence.
- Robust procedures that are linked to salary progression are implemented to improve teachers' performance. Where teaching requires improvement, leaders provide appropriate individual support. Partnerships with other schools in the Shoeburyness Education Partnership, and the Catholic schools partnership, are proving beneficial in ensuring that teachers' assessments of pupils' achievements are totally reliable and that teachers use this information to help pupils achieve as much as they can.
- The curriculum, which includes a range of visits, visitors and out-of-school activities, makes a positive contribution to pupils' learning and to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This applies in lessons and in assemblies, where the celebration of pupils' achievement and contribution to the community are strongly emphasised.
- Another strength in the curriculum is the provision of a wide range of sporting activities and physical education lessons funded from the primary school sports funding. A coach works alongside teachers to increase their skills in teaching physical education and encouraging healthy lifestyles. This helps to provide a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Pupils take part in many local tournaments and sporting events, such as, netball, swimming and athletics.
- All staff responding to the staff questionnaire said the school is well led and managed. Teachers rightly say that the school is providing training and experiences that are helping them to improve their teaching. Recent training in problem solving in mathematics is helping teachers to confidently provide a wider range of learning activities to develop pupils' mathematical skills across the curriculum. Staff are proud of the school and its achievements, and work well as a team.
- Funding for the pupil premium has been used for one-to-one and small-group support for pupils, and to buy books and equipment to support the teaching of mathematics and reading. The impact of this funding is carefully monitored, showing that eligible pupils are making good and sometimes outstanding progress.
- The local authority provides appropriate support to the school and has linked it to a school-support partner to help staff improve provision further.

■ The governance of the school:

- The governing body makes a huge contribution to continually improving the school through its rigorous examination and analysis of the extensive data and other information provided by the headteacher. As a result, governors have a clear picture of the school's performance, which they use very effectively to question and hold the leaders and teachers to account. They visit the school regularly, see for themselves what happens in the classrooms and pursue the views of parents and pupils. They have established clear links between the headteacher's pay and school targets, and they ensure that this is also how the staff pay is awarded in order to improve the standards of teaching further.
- The budget is well managed. The governing body ensures that the pupil premium and primary school sports funding are used for the intended purposes and that they are having a positive impact on pupils' attainment and the development of healthier lifestyles. Statutory duties are met effectively, especially in ensuring that the school's safeguarding arrangements meet requirements.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	115149
Local authority	Southend-on-Sea
Inspection number	430796

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 of pupils on the school roll	209
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Frank McEvoy
Headteacher	Annabelle Smith
Date of previous school inspection	20 March 2012
Telephone number	01702 293522
Fax number	01702 291126
Email address	office@st-georges.southend.sch.uk

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