

St George's Church of England Primary School

Beaufort Road, Birmingham, B16 8HY

Inspection dates

20–21 January 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected as an academy	
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management	Good		2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good		2
Quality of teaching	Good		2
Achievement of pupils	Good		2
Early years provision	Good		2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils achieve well. They make good progress from low starting points so that, by the end of Year 6, they reach average standards in reading and mathematics, and above average standards in writing.
- Governors, senior leaders and managers are highly ambitious for the school. Recent actions have ensured that achievement and teaching are good and are improving.
- Teaching and learning in the Reception class are good so that children benefit from a strong start to their learning.
- Pupils continue to achieve well in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Their progress in writing is particularly good.
- The school has worked remarkably well with parents to improve pupils' attendance; attendance is now above the national average.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development exceptionally well. There is a strong sense of community throughout the school, which pupils, parents and staff are proud of and happy to share.
- The curriculum is rich and diverse, and makes a significant contribution towards developing pupil's skills, knowledge and understanding.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. Adult's expectations of pupils' attitudes to learning and behaviour are high and this results in strong levels of trust and respect between the pupils themselves and towards adults.
- Pupils feel very safe in this inclusive and harmonious school. They are usually eager to learn, are very proud of their school. Parents value the friendly environment in which their children learn well.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The work set is not always challenging enough to hold pupils' interest, especially for the most-able.
- Targets to raise pupils' achievement in English and mathematics are set by some teachers but not by all; consequently, pupils in some classes are not always clear about what they could achieve.
- Marking is not always sufficiently detailed to guide pupils towards better standards. Pupils do not always have the opportunity to respond to their teacher's comments and learn how to improve their work.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 18 lessons, two of which were seen jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with staff, a group of pupils and five members of the governing body.
- Inspectors heard pupils read and talked to them formally and informally at break and lunchtime.
- Inspectors took account of one letter from a parent and the 24 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). They had conversations with parents and carers as they dropped off their children at the start of the school day. Inspectors also considered the 20 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- School documentation was examined, including data on pupils' current progress and records of governors' meetings, behaviour, attendance and safeguarding. Inspectors carefully reviewed the system used to check teachers' performance. Documentation relating to the care of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs was also reviewed.

Inspection team

Andrew Stafford, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Joseph Figg

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St George's Primary converted to become an academy school in July 2013. When its predecessor school, also called St George's Primary, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be satisfactory.
- St George's Primary is smaller than the average-sized primary school. There is one class in Reception and all Reception children attend full-time. There is one class for each year-group in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.
- More pupils than is the case nationally join the school at other than the usual time.
- Pupils in Year 6 are grouped by ability for teaching in mathematics.
- Over three quarters of pupils are from a minority ethnic heritage, the remainder being of White British heritage. More pupils than average speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average, at 26%. A small minority of pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- Approximately 63% of the pupils are supported by the pupil premium (the additional funding allocated by the government which, in this school, is used to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority). This is well above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The headteacher was appointed in April 2013, three months before the school opened as an academy. In September 2014 a new leader for special educational needs was appointed, and also one newly qualified teacher.
- There is an 'Early School' club which is managed by the governing body, and this formed part of the inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that standards of attainment and the rates of progress pupils make in their learning are consistently outstanding by:
 - providing more challenging work to engage pupils' interest and raise their achievement, especially for the most-able
 - making sure that marking helps pupils understand how to improve their work, and pupils are given regular opportunities to respond to the teachers' marking comments
 - ensuring there is consistent use of targets in English and mathematics in all classes so that all pupils are clear about what they can achieve.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides inspirational, determined and focused leadership that is increasingly involving all staff in school improvement work. She is supported by an effective team, including the governors, who are ambitious to raise standards further. This has resulted in an ethos in which good behaviour is the norm and pupils make good progress.
- Senior leaders know the school well and maintain a rigorous focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning. Recent improvements are beginning to ensure that more pupils make better than expected progress and reach higher levels of attainment, including in the early years.
- Leaders manage teachers' performance well. A highly effective system is in place that enables leaders to identify teachers' training needs and provide relevant training. The professional development of staff is given a high priority and is linked explicitly to pupils' progress. Newly qualified teachers and those in the early stages of their career are well supported. This is bringing about significant improvements in the quality of teaching and reflects the school's high expectations.
- Middle leaders are well organised and check standards in their subjects systematically. They offer class teachers well-judged advice and practical support to improve their teaching. However, middle leaders have not checked to see if pupils in all classes are given targets to aim for at the end of a year as they are in some. As a result, school practice with regard to the setting of targets to improve pupils' learning in English and mathematics is inconsistent.
- The school organises its teaching effectively to reflect pupils' abilities and needs, particularly in Year 6 in mathematics, where setting is being used effectively to raise standards. Most teaching succeeds in engaging pupils' interest and improving their skills and knowledge, although work set is sometimes insufficiently interesting or challenging, particularly for the most able. Pupils say how much they enjoy doing topics such as 'The Egyptians', 'Superheroes' and 'Battlefields and Beyond'. Pupils enjoy the good range of after-school clubs and visits, including the residential ones.
- The school has a broad and diverse curriculum that meets most pupils' needs and prepares all pupils very well for life in modern Britain. Learning is enriched by a wide-ranging and interesting variety of subjects taught by specialists, including art, music and sport. The school provides a range of exciting learning opportunities for pupils. For example, many children learn to play a musical instrument, and others work in the school's allotment which also enriches their experiences in school. There are opportunities for pupils to take part in day trips relating to their lessons and topics; for example, the school organised a visit to the Stafford army barracks, where Year 6 experienced a mock-up of World War 1 trenches. Pupils also recounted how much they had enjoyed their residential visit to Cornwall.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is exceptional. Assemblies are highly positive experiences that allow pupils the opportunity to reflect on the school's values, and to consider wider issues like democracy and justice. Pupils are genuinely pleased for each other when academic or sporting achievement is celebrated. A carefully thought-out programme ensures that pupils develop a strong understanding of different beliefs and lifestyles from around the world from the moment they enter the school. Themed topics are used effectively to complement this. For example, an annual themed month entitled 'Black History' covered many aspects of culture, history and society in Britain and abroad.
- The school supports disadvantaged pupils very well through its careful use of the pupil premium and is very successful in giving every child the chance to succeed and benefit from all aspects of school life. Variations in the rates of progress between different groups of pupils are being reduced. Pupils state that there is no discrimination in the school. Parents also confirm that the school operates in a very friendly, caring and supportive environment.
- The primary sports funding is used well and provides extensive opportunities for pupils to engage in sport and to promote their physical development. A sports coach works with teachers to develop pupils' skills,

health and well-being, and pupils frequently participate in a range of local tournaments, including girls and boys football.

- The Diocese of Birmingham has been very supportive of the school during its planned conversion to academy status and has also been instrumental in helping it to raise standards.

■ The governance of the school:

- The newly-constituted governing body is well informed and governors know the school well. The governing body actively contributes to the school's monitoring and evaluation programme. Governors make use of available data on pupils' achievement and their robust questioning of senior leaders gives them valuable information about teaching quality and all aspects of the school's performance. Governors provide both support and challenge for the headteacher and ensure that she is held to account for pupils' progress. For example, they ensure that there is a clear link between the way in which teachers move along the pay scales and their impact of pupils' progress. Governors carefully check the use of the pupil premium funding and are aware of the highly positive impact it has had upon learning for this group of eligible pupils. Governors are similarly diligent in ensuring that the additional sports funding is used well. Together with school leaders, governors ensure that all statutory requirements are met, including those for safeguarding.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Staff set high standards to which pupils readily respond. Pupils show respect and friendliness to adults, visitors and their classmates. Any disagreements can be referred to the 'Friendship Council', where pupils help others to resolve difficulties. This ensures a happy, welcoming and harmonious school, which has a very positive effect on the rate at which pupils learn.
- The school uses its wide range of rewards to promote its vision of 'Our love of learning leads us to excellence'. Pupils' good attendance, behaviour, work and reading are regularly celebrated and pupils are encouraged to take pleasure in the success of others.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are good across the school. However, very occasionally a few pupils lose concentration, when they are given a task they find too easy.
- Attendance has improved because the school has worked hard with pupils and their families to help them understand how important it is to come to school regularly. The introduction of an Early School club has made a significant contribution towards achieving above average attendance and improving punctuality.
- Pupils with particular behavioural needs are helped to learn to manage their behaviour through a robust system of rewards and sanctions. There have been no pupils excluded since the academy opened.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Procedures for identifying and reporting any safeguarding issues are very thorough. The school liaises well with other agencies in order to provide the best possible support for pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable, as well as for their families.
- Staff are trained very well to ensure pupils' safety. Pupils understand the roles of the emergency services and know, for instance, that the police, ambulance and fire services are there to help.
- Pupils know about keeping themselves safe. They are very clear about what constitutes bullying and the various forms it can take. They assert that this occurs very rarely in school and explain that this is because lessons and assemblies teach them to be kind and respectful of different lifestyles, faiths and ethnic groups.

- The school provides excellent opportunities for pupils to develop their social, sporting and other skills in a safe and stimulating environment, both at the beginning and end of the school day and in the Early School club and after-school activities and clubs.
- The views of all pupils are valued and nurtured, so all feel special. Pupils enjoy the responsibilities they are given and the work of the School Council, in requesting outdoor play equipment, has improved behaviour and safety. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated and all pupils have an equal opportunity to succeed.
- All parents and carers who completed Parent View responses stated that the school makes sure that pupils are well behaved and that it deals effectively with rare instances of bullying. All parents and carers who responded also believe their children are happy, safe and well looked after at school.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching is consistently good and has been over time. There are examples of outstanding teaching. Discussions with pupils and a scrutiny of the work in their books confirm that teaching is good.
- Teachers use a wide range of strategies to improve pupils' progress. For example, the teaching of reading and writing is based on giving pupils a sound, basic grasp of phonics (the links between letters and the sounds they make). The school is especially effective in supporting pupils who are learning English as an additional language. These pupils make particularly good progress.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work very well together to ensure that pupils, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, have the support and challenge that they need to make good progress. This is particularly true for recently arrived pupils who speak little or no English. From the early years onwards small groups are taught skills in, for example, phonics sessions. Pupils appreciate this support and report that they enjoy learning and that teachers make lessons fun. Parents say that their children are taught very well.
- Improvements in the teaching, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics, have helped to raise attainment and progress, especially in writing, but also across a wide range of other subjects.
- Homework, linked to the work pupils complete in school, is set and marked regularly. Year 6 pupils were especially proud of working at home in their new 'Learning Logs'.
- Staff report they get good opportunities to develop their expertise in areas in which they were once less confident. There are productive links with the Ladywood Consortium, a partnership of 17 local primary and secondary schools, which provides good opportunities for joint staff training. This is having a markedly beneficial impact on the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Inspectors' observations of teaching and the work in pupils' books show that most of the work undertaken by pupils successfully matches their ability and moves their learning forward. Occasionally teachers do not move pupils on to more challenging activities quickly enough. For example, inspectors saw lessons when the need to provide harder work to move pupils' learning forward was not recognised soon enough. At such times, pupils sometimes do not always concentrate as hard as they could and the rate of learning slows, especially for the most able.
- Teachers' marking shows pupils where they have been successful but does not consistently show them what they need to do next to improve their work. Sometimes pupils are not always given time to act on the guidance they are given and so do not make as much progress as they could.

The achievement of pupils**is good**

- By the end of Year 6, pupils consistently reach at least expected standards in reading and mathematics, and attain above average standards in writing. This represents good progress from their low starting points. Standards are rising across the school.
- The school's results in the Year 1 phonics screening check were higher than the national average in 2014 and standards continue to rise. The school is especially effective in the way in which it teaches the youngest pupils to read and as a result standards in reading and writing are also improving.
- Attainment in mathematics is not yet as high as it is in writing but it is rising. The school has given greater emphasis to the teaching of basic skills so that these are reinforced, both within mathematics lessons and in other subjects. For example, pupils in Year 1 were challenged to solve 'real-life' money problems using a range of materials, and this helped them to gain a more secure understanding of number. Pupils' work shows that actions taken to improve standards in mathematics are being successful.
- Disadvantaged pupils are targeted with additional support to close the gaps between their progress and attainment and that of their classmates. In 2014, the Key Stage 2 test results showed that disadvantaged pupils were in line with their classmates in reading and writing, although nearly two terms behind in mathematics. In comparison with all pupils nationally, disadvantaged pupils were more than two terms behind in reading, behind by roughly one and a half terms in mathematics, and were roughly one term in front in writing. Across the school, eligible pupils are making at least good progress from their starting points, reflecting the school's effective use of the pupil premium.
- The achievement of the most able pupils is good but stronger in writing than it is in reading and mathematics. In 2014, an above average proportion of the most able pupils in Year 6 achieved the higher levels in writing and English grammar and spelling. A broadly average proportion did so in mathematics and a below average proportion reached the higher level in reading.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics as a result of the effectively targeted support they receive. These pupils make at least expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language make better progress than their classmates because the school focuses strongly on developing their vocabulary and on their correct use of grammar. Recent arrivals in the school are integrated quickly and teachers plan carefully to meet the needs of these pupils and any who are at the early stages of learning English.
- Pupils from different ethnic groups achieve equally well because the school is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity and is highly successful at tackling discrimination.

The early years provision**is good**

- The early years leader provides effective leadership and management and has a good knowledge of the strengths and areas for improvement in the school's provision.
- Children join the Early Years with skills and abilities that are mostly typical for their age but are often weak in communication, language and personal development. All groups of children, including disabled children, those who have special educational needs and children who speak English as an additional language make good progress. An above average proportion achieve a good level of development by the end of Reception. This ensures children are able to make a smooth transition into Year 1.
- The school has well-organised induction systems to support children when they first start school. It has positive links with parents, enabling teachers to gather valuable background information, and this helps children to settle quickly into the early years.

- Teaching is good and standards are rising in the early years. The activities prepared for the children are well planned and organised to optimise the choices available to children. This ensures that children are able to explore and learn from their experiences consistently well. For example, in the water area, children counted how many full bottles were needed to fill the large jug. There is a good balance of adult-led activities and those children choose for themselves. This helps children to improve their speaking and listening skills and personal development well.
- Adults' work closely with children during activities such as role play, so that they push back the boundaries of their understanding and make imaginative use of language. In this way they quickly become enthusiastic learners.
- Early reading and speaking skills are developed well through carefully structured phonics and other reading sessions. Both indoor and outdoor learning areas are safe, clean and well-maintained.
- Children's behaviour is good because of the positive adult support they receive. Children cooperate well with each other, for example, when taking turns in their use of the good range of equipment. Children's health and well-being are promoted very well.

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	139267
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	449809

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy alternative provision sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	208
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rowland Hopkins
Headteacher	Shirley Atkar
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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