

St George's CofE First School

Stevenson Avenue, Redditch, Worcestershire B98 8LU

Inspection dates

8–9 November 2016

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Inadequate
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Inadequate
Early years provision	Inadequate
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Pupils from Nursery to Year 4 make inadequate progress because teaching is weak. Outcomes at the end of Year 2 have remained well below the national figures for the last four years.
- Leaders and teachers, particularly in the early years, lack a sense of urgency in identifying and meeting the significant gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills.
- Teachers have not focused sufficiently on ensuring that pupils, of all ages, quickly and securely acquire the language they need to help them learn.
- Teachers do not assess accurately how well the pupils have learned in lessons, or plan what they should learn next. Too little is expected of pupils and work is not matched to their abilities. Pupils' errors are too often ignored. Pupils have little pride in their work.
- Leaders have not tracked the progress of disadvantaged and most able pupils with sufficient accuracy. Disadvantaged pupils, including the most able, remained about two terms behind other pupils nationally between 2013 and 2015.
- The headteacher has not made her expectations of teaching clear. Leaders at all levels are too slow to identify where teaching deviates from agreed approaches. They do not challenge or correct weaknesses quickly enough.
- Governors have not held leaders to account for pupils' slow progress and low standards of attainment over the last four years.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils feel safe in school and trust that any concern will be dealt with quickly and effectively.
- Teaching assistants are deployed effectively. They lead interesting and purposeful activities.
- Attendance is rigorously checked and is steadily improving.
- Phonics is taught well in Year 1. In 2016, standards were in line with national figures in the Year 1 phonics screening check.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching across the school, including in the early years, and accelerate pupils' progress, by ensuring that all teachers:
 - immerse pupils in language so they speedily acquire and apply the spoken and written vocabulary they need in each subject
 - assess accurately what pupils know and can do
 - plan lessons which systematically build on previous learning
 - provide purposeful learning activities which challenge the most able pupils
 - provide suitable tasks for those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities so they are fully engaged in day-to-day lessons
 - identify errors in pupils' work so that they learn from their mistakes
 - teach pupils of all ages how to present their work neatly, and consistently expect high standards from them.
- Improve leadership at all levels by ensuring that leaders and managers:
 - identify the gaps in pupils' knowledge and make sure appropriate support is provided speedily and effectively
 - track pupils' progress in detail so that those pupils in danger of falling behind are identified and given support
 - share clear and consistent expectations of teachers
 - check, challenge and correct teachers who fail to suitably implement agreed approaches to teaching
 - check for weaknesses in teaching and ensure that staff receive the right guidance, support or challenge.
- Ensure that pupils are supervised during lunchtimes so that quarrels are quickly averted and do not escalate.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership may be improved.

Newly qualified teachers should not be appointed to the school.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Leaders, including governors, do not have high enough expectations of pupils' achievement. They have not done enough to ensure that pupils progress rapidly, or that they reach high enough standards.
- Leaders do not track the progress of different groups of pupils with sufficient accuracy or depth to identify where progress is too slow, so that they can stem decline.
- Leaders have not communicated clearly what they expect of staff. Training for staff and the management of their performance do not consistently bring about the necessary improvements in teaching. Leaders have been too slow to identify, challenge and correct emerging weaknesses. As a result, weaknesses in teaching persist.
- Some subject leaders are relatively new to their role. Their efforts to bring about improvements have been undermined by the large turnover of staff over the last three years. Nevertheless, they have not led initiatives with sufficient confidence or checked that agreed schemes are implemented correctly or consistently.
- The pupil premium funding does not have the intended impact on disadvantaged pupils' progress and attainment. Leaders compare the progress of disadvantaged pupils with their classmates rather than with other pupils nationally. This comparison gives an over-positive view of success, as the non-disadvantaged pupils achieve well below pupils nationally.
- Pupils' breadth of knowledge and development of skills across a range of subjects are limited. They are rarely required to observe or investigate scientifically or seek historical information. Their topic work is not consistently marked, so pupils' misunderstandings and errors go unnoticed or are not corrected.
- The range of educational visits enhances pupils' learning and helps them gain experience of the wider world. They particularly enjoy visits to Covent Garden, the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra and museums, Cadbury World, the theatre, cinema and walks in the park.
- Additional sports funding has been used effectively to train teachers and increase pupils' participation in inter-school competitive sports. Pupils' confidence has grown as they successfully developed essential skills in a range of activities.
- Pupils' knowledge of life in modern Britain and their awareness of British values are underpinned by the school's own ethics and principles. Pupils celebrate diversity while showing good levels of respect and tolerance. Pupils appreciate the need for school rules and generally show good manners. They have first-hand experience of democracy when they vote for school council members. They understand the beliefs, customs and celebrations of different religions and visit different places of worship. School assemblies provide time for reflection and purposefully acknowledge different faiths.
- Leaders, including governors and staff, share a commitment to pupils' well-being. They genuinely care about the pupils and want them to grow in confidence and develop self-esteem. All staff are keen to encourage the development of the 'whole person'.

Governance of the school

- Governors have not challenged or held leaders sufficiently to account for pupils' slow progress and ongoing low attainment.

- Governors are too ready to accept leaders' accounts for the lack of pupil premium impact on the progress and achievement of disadvantaged pupils.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- All staff and governors are committed to keeping pupils safe from harm. Training for all staff is timely and is supplemented with regular updates. Staff know the indications of harm or abuse. Concerns are recorded in detail and include all follow-up actions, no matter how minor the initial referral. All cases involving external agencies are tracked so that the relevance and effectiveness of support are kept under review. All staff and governors involved in appointing staff have had 'safer recruitment' training. Suitable checks are made on all visitors to the school. Regular assessments of risk are conducted regarding educational visits and the school premises.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- There has been a significant turnover of staff over the last three years, which has contributed to the lack of consistency in teaching, learning and assessment across the school.
- Teachers expect too little of pupils' work in a range of subjects. Pupils are not taught the essential vocabulary they need to understand and express their knowledge in different subjects. Pupils are not taught to or expected to present their work neatly or correctly. Pages in some books are torn, work is carelessly crossed out and worksheets are untidily glued into books. Pupils have no pride in their work and little motivation to improve.
- Teachers do not provide work that is matched well enough to pupils' different abilities. Activities in a range of subjects are often too easy for the most able pupils and too difficult for those with learning difficulties. As a result, the most able lose interest and the less able give up.
- Basic mistakes in spelling and punctuation are not identified or corrected and become embedded over time. Pupils rarely apply the recommendations to improve their work. In some books, pupils' work has worsened since the beginning of the term.
- Pupils do not make sufficient progress in mathematics because teachers do not regularly assess what the pupils have learned and accurately plan what they should learn next. Pupils cover a range of mathematical topics and they are required to solve routine problems. However, these activities are simplistic and pupils' understanding of mathematical concepts lacks sufficient depth.
- Reading is taught systematically and Year 1 pupils, in particular, have a secure knowledge of phonics. The most able Year 2 readers recognise many words, read with understanding and are able to break down unfamiliar words using their knowledge of phonics. They know how to change their expression in response to different punctuation. The least able readers recognise individual letters and sounds and can build simple unfamiliar words such as 'big' and 'trip'. The pupils know the main characters in stories and understand the events.
- Support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is inadequate in day-to-day lessons. This is because planned activities do not take enough account of their difficulties. However, a range of additional support provided outside the classroom

is effective and ensures that individual pupils' needs are met. Pupils in these targeted groups make good progress towards the expected standards for their age.

- Teaching assistants are often deployed effectively. They have clear expectations of the pupils they support. They lead stimulating activities, which inspire pupils' interest and methodically build on what pupils know and can do. They frequently model clear vocabulary and help pupils to form correct sentences orally and in writing. They guide pupils' understanding in mathematics and are quick to identify a lack of understanding and correct errors.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Pupils are generally proud of their school but, in discussions they did not all agree that they would recommend the school to their friends. They say the best thing about the school is the teachers, because they are helpful.
- Pupils have little pride in their work. They are not taught how to present their work neatly and they do not correct their work often enough to learn from their mistakes. They lack a sense of belief in themselves because they are not shown how to improve or aim high. Too little is expected of the pupils and, as a result, they expect too little of themselves.
- All staff share a commitment to care for pupils of all ages and provide a safe environment in which pupils can work and play. Staff know the pupils well and endeavour to make sure pupils feel settled and confident.
- Pupils show respect for adults and one another in lessons, assemblies and moving around school. They work together cooperatively. Pupils say that they feel safe in school because staff are kind. Visitors, such as the police, help pupils understand important aspects of personal safety.
- Pupils are keen to take responsibility, for example in the school council or as librarians. They apply formally for their roles and are chosen following interviews. Pupils contributed to forming the school's values, which are displayed in the reception area.
- Pupils are aware of the different types of bullying. They know what to look out for. Pupils say they are well cared for in school and that 'bullying is not allowed'. They are confident to tell staff about any concern or worry. They believe that staff quickly tackle occasional incidents of bullying.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Pupils, in discussions with inspectors, reported concerns about behaviour during lunchtimes. The school's records of behaviour confirm that there have been some fights since September. The incidents were investigated quickly and dealt with appropriately. Pupils agreed, 'It's getting a bit better now.'
- In lessons, pupils listen carefully to adults' instructions and explanations. They discuss their ideas with one another and are keen to share. Adults encourage pupils to work cooperatively in groups and are quick to praise examples of good behaviour.

- Attendance remains below the national average but has improved recently. By July this year, 55 pupils celebrated 100% attendance. All absences are tracked and methodically investigated. Leaders and the local authority use all available sanctions, including fines and formal warnings, to challenge unauthorised absence.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- Pupils' progress from their different starting points is inadequate in reading, writing and mathematics. Although pupils' specific weaknesses are identified on entry to the school, teachers do not plan sufficiently detailed or precise steps in pupils' learning to assure their consistent or rapid progress.
- The very large majority of pupils are at the early stages of learning English when they enter the school at different stages of their education. Leaders have rightly identified the priority for pupils to learn basic vocabulary and build a bank of essential words. However, teachers do not plan sufficient, regular and focused opportunities for pupils to speedily acquire and develop the necessary vocabulary and language skills. As a consequence, pupils' progress is hampered because they are unable to fully understand or engage in their learning.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities do not make enough progress over time. The majority of pupils who have learning difficulties leave the Reception Year without achieving a good level of development. Hardly any of these pupils go on to achieve the standard expected for their age in reading, writing or mathematics by the end of Year 2.
- Attainment at the end of key stage 1, from 2013 to 2015, was significantly below the national average in all subjects. Disadvantaged pupils, including the most able, remained about two terms behind other pupils nationally.
- In 2016, attainment was well below national figures. The vast majority of the disadvantaged pupils in Year 2 did not attain the expected standard for their age in any subject. Very few pupils met the expected standards at a deeper level.
- Too many of the most able pupils are not identified early enough. These pupils are not suitably challenged in lessons, they make insufficient progress over time and they fail to attain the standards at a greater depth by the end of Year 2.
- Disadvantaged pupils achieved as well as other pupils nationally in the Year 1 phonics screening check.

Early years provision

Inadequate

- Leaders of the early years provision lack a sense of urgency. Adults are too slow to systematically address what the children need to learn, know and practise from their point of entry in Nursery. The proportion of children leaving the Reception Year with a good level of development remains well below the national average. Children are not adequately prepared for their next stage in education.
- Most children join the Nursery Year with knowledge and skills that are well below those typical for their age. The large majority of children are at an early stage of learning English. However, teachers do not focus enough on ensuring that children rapidly

acquire the language they need to learn and develop effectively.

- Where adults speak the children's first language, their explanations are very helpful so that children understand what is expected of them. However, children are not persistently encouraged to identify and practise naming objects, actions and sounds in English. As a result, the children do not pick up simple vocabulary through their activities.
- Planned indoor and outdoor activities occupy the children but fail to focus and build on the skills they urgently need to acquire. For example, on entry to the school, children are unfamiliar with the toys, tools and materials available to them. Adults do not readily model for children how to handle the equipment or use a variety of apparatus. When children climb, ride tricycles and balance, staff do not seize the opportunity to name objects or actions, or build on children's vocabulary.
- Adults do not expect enough of the children. Many of the children in the Reception class are still at an early stage of making marks rather than showing early writing skills. Letter formation is not taught methodically or regularly enough. As a consequence, the children do not learn and practise the skills they need to write letters, words and sentences.
- Phonics is not taught with sufficient precision in some early years classes. Adults do not consistently pronounce sounds clearly or expect accurate pronunciation from children in return. Teachers do not make sure that children understand the link between recognising, naming and writing the letters they learn about so that children apply the skills they learn in phonics to writing.
- Children count with confidence. They are able to match objects to a given number and check by counting. A small number of children have a more advanced knowledge of number but adults do not plan tasks to match their level of knowledge.
- When the children work with teaching assistants, they respond eagerly to purposeful activities that require them to count, name and match colours or recognise letters and sounds. They learn effectively and are proud of their achievements.
- One teacher has worked closely with a group of Reception children and her targeted support has helped the children progress closer to the expectations for their age. Her knowledge of the children's language development led her to successfully identify children's specific speech and language difficulties, and specialist support was then provided.
- Staff rightly want the children to settle, feel safe and cared for, and enjoy coming to school. They frequently notice and praise children's good behaviour and children are keen to please.
- Staff establish good relationships with parents and keep them well informed about the topics their children will cover and how they can help. Reading books and diaries go home every day. Children also read frequently to an adult in school.

School details

Unique reference number	116843
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	10019497

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	First
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	222
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jane Potter
Headteacher	Caroline Redfern
Telephone number	01527 62263
Website	http://www.stgeorges.worcs.sch.uk
Email address	office@stgeorges.worcs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	November 2011

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- St George's is an average-sized first school.
- A large majority of pupils are from minority ethnic groups and most of these pupils speak English as an additional language. A growing number of pupils come from Eastern Europe.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average.
- Children in the Nursery class attend part time and the Reception children attend full time. There are two mixed-age classes, one in each key stage.

- The school was awarded the Achievement for All (AFA) Quality Mark in July 2016 as well as the Leading Parent Partnership Award in November this year.

Information about this inspection

- The headteacher was absent during the inspection. Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all classes with the deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors met with pupils, heard a selection of pupils read, observed pupils at breaktimes and attended school assemblies.
- Inspectors met with the deputy headteacher, senior teachers with subject responsibilities, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- A range of pupils' books from all year groups and a range of subjects were looked at.
- A number of documents were considered, including the school's self-evaluation and development plans. Inspectors also considered information about pupils' progress, behaviour, attendance and safety.
- Inspectors took account of the findings from the school's surveys of parents. There were insufficient responses on the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, to form a report.
- Inspectors reviewed 16 responses to an inspection questionnaire returned by staff.

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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