

St George's School

Independent school light-touch inspection report

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Reporting inspector	Julie Winyard

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.^{1, 2}

This was a light touch educational inspection which focused principally on the quality of education provided by the school; its provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; the arrangements for safeguarding pupils and the improvements the school has made since its last inspection.

Information about the school

St George's is a non-selective, co-educational school for 107 pupils aged 0-11. Children aged three to four years, together with the under-3s, are registered in the Little Steps Nursery which is part of the school and on the same site. The headteacher took up her appointment in September 2010. The school opened in 1914 and is situated in Dunstable, Bedfordshire. The school aims 'to support each child, whatever their needs or differences, to benefit from a full, diverse curriculum.' The school was previously inspected by Ofsted in 2008 and the registered childcare for the under 3's was previously inspected in 2005. There is one child in the nursery identified as requiring a statement of special educational needs. The school are waiting for this document to be completed.

Evaluation of the school

St George's provides a good quality of education for all its pupils with outstanding provision and outcomes for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and for safeguarding their welfare, health and safety. Pupils have a very positive attitude to school and really enjoy, and make the most of, all the learning opportunities the school offers to them. They are well prepared for the next stage of their education. There is good provision for children in the Nursery who make good progress in all the areas of learning. The school has made good progress in addressing the recommendations made in the previous inspection and all the regulations are now met.

Quality of education

The curriculum is good and meets the needs of all pupils in the school. It is based upon the National Curriculum and effective planning highlights the key skills, knowledge and understanding that pupils will be expected to learn every term in

¹ www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga_20020032_en_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162

² www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/ukpga_20050018_en_15#sch8

each subject. The school uses a thematic approach to make good links between curriculum subjects, for example in the 'Belonging' theme where pupils explored concepts of equality, kindness, helpfulness. Since the last inspection the school has developed a practical assessment policy, which includes termly teacher assessment in numeracy and literacy. Teachers look at pupils' work together and evaluate the level pupils are working at based on national curriculum levels. Teachers' weekly plans have clear learning targets for each lesson, based upon their assessments, and show how the needs of all pupils including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are catered for. After every lesson teachers note how well pupils have got on and what learning needs to be planned for the next lesson. Subject leaders monitor planning in English and mathematics. Science and mathematics are taught by subject specialists in Key Stage 2. The school has started to have one topic across all classes in order to share resources and visits. For example, in a recent literacy week the focus was on one particular author. During the week all pupils visited the local museum and the theatre. The curriculum is enhanced and enriched by a good range of visitors. Recent ones include an astronaut and a storyteller. There are visits to museums, historic sites and to theatres. Pupils are very enthusiastic and say how much they enjoy these events. Wall displays are attractive and illustrate the wide range of areas covered by the curriculum; photographs are used well to record the activities organised for pupils to support their learning.

Teaching and assessment throughout the school are good. Pupils made good progress in the lessons seen because of their enjoyment of the interesting and fun activities planned for them. This was evident, for example, in a mathematics lesson where younger pupils enjoyed using cubes to calculate doubles of numbers. Pupils say that 'teachers make sure we understand the work and make the work interesting' and that 'because it's fun you learn more.' All teachers have good subject knowledge and make clear to the pupils what they will be learning during the lesson. Activities are well matched to pupils' abilities. Teachers explain tasks well. However, in their written marking and feedback they do not make sufficiently clear what pupils have done well and exactly what they need to do to improve their work further, especially in writing. Because of the good teaching, planning and assessment pupils make good progress in most subjects. However, their rate of progress is slower in writing and is currently satisfactory. The school recognises that this is because pupils do not have sufficiently sharply focused targets for improvement.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because of the personalised programmes and clear targets they are given. Teaching assistants are well briefed and give good support to pupils who need additional help in lessons and also in one-to-one sessions. The special needs coordinator makes a very detailed analysis of pupils' needs and liaises closely with parents regarding how these needs can best be met. Outside agencies are used well to support the school's analysis and individual education plans.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

There is outstanding provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, which results in outstanding outcomes for all pupils. The many opportunities for reflection in lessons and in assemblies are part of this provision. For example, in the weekly 'Newsround' assembly pupils watched with great interest a children's news programme and were then asked to reflect on what they had heard. They were thrilled to see the pet pig that a shop owner took to work with him. The discussion on why the local council were trying to prevent this enabled them to think of the reasons for and against this idea.

Pupils work and play together exceptionally well and their behaviour is excellent in lessons and on the playground. They are very aware of the need to get on well together and this collaborative and caring approach is evident at all times. Teachers model this very well and pupils appreciate the warm and caring environment they are taught in. Pupils have an excellent understanding of other cultures because the school is such a diverse community and makes the most of the cultural richness available. Pupils' moral awareness is also developed through the support they give to children in Africa. One pupil explained, 'We are sending money to one child in Africa so that they can go to school.' Because the pupils receive regular updates about the children they sponsor, they are aware of the value of the support they give. This awareness contributes to their understanding of how to make a positive contribution to society. Because pupils have a good understanding of basic skills of literacy and numeracy and are growing in confidence in their use of information and communication technology, they are well prepared for the next stage in their education.

Pupils greatly enjoy school and have very positive attitudes to learning. This was evident both in talking with pupils and in their responses to the questionnaire. For example, one pupil commented: 'I love my school because it is small, fun and friendly. The teachers are brilliant! I am learning a lot.' Attendance is high and parents say their children are unhappy if they cannot come to school.

Safeguarding pupils' welfare, health and safety

Safeguarding processes and procedures are extremely robust and fully in place. All the required checks are made on staff, including full Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks. The school takes exceptional care of its pupils, ensuring that they are safe at all times. Detailed risk assessments are written for all activities, including trips out of school. The health and safety coordinator is vigilant and her weekly written checks are detailed and comprehensive. Pupils say they feel very safe at school and that there is no bullying. They particularly liked the activities during the recent anti-bullying week and are in the process of buying a buddy bench for the playground. They say this will make sure that no child is left out of games at playtimes. Many of the staff are trained in first aid and all have completed appropriate safeguarding training.

School meals are of a high quality; they are healthy and nutritious and pupils have a fruit snack at break times. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to live a healthy lifestyle and love the opportunities the school gives them to take part in sport. They are knowledgeable about what foods are good for them and why, and know that chocolate may be a good energy food but it is not good for their teeth. They talk enthusiastically of the healthy meals they have at home.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

The overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good, enabling children get off to a good start in their education at the Little Steps Nursery. The provision for the under-3s meets the requirements of the Early Years Register. Induction procedures are robust and this ensures that children settle well into the life of the school. They enter the Nursery with knowledge and skills that are slightly below what those expected for their age, particularly in their language and social skills. Outcomes are good. There is seamless transition between the Nursery and Reception class, and by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage children make good progress in their learning in relation to their starting points. Their greatest achievements are in their personal, social and emotional development, together with their communication, language and literacy skills.

Children behave very well and display good attitudes towards learning. They are polite and courteous to visitors. Relationships are warm and respectful and this contributes very well to children's personal development and well being. Consequently, children respond with enjoyment to the learning environment and are confident to ask for help when they need it. Children get on well with one another and those from different cultural backgrounds play and work harmoniously together. Children have access to nutritious meals, healthy snacks and water which support their healthy eating habits. Carefully planned hygiene routines are well established in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children are encouraged to wash their hands before meals and after messy activities. For example, in the Nursery, nappy changing routines and disposal and the role modelling of hygiene by all members of staff help to reduce the risks of infections. Staff are well informed about children's health and those in the Nursery now ensure that parents' signatures are obtained on medical records.

The provision is good. Staff are sensitive to the children's needs and provide them with a stimulating range of activities and resources in both indoor and outdoor areas to support their knowledge and skills in all the areas of learning. There is a good balance between activities led by adults and those activities chosen by children themselves. The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. The manager has been in post for just over a year and staff work effectively as a team. They attend a range of courses to support their own professional development. Staff carry out risk assessments regularly and take effective steps to minimise risks. The school takes robust steps to ensure that all those working with children are suitable. The setting works very well with parents

and one parent commented, 'This is a fantastic place because every family is equally welcome and supported.' Staff have developed close links with agencies and organisations, ensuring appropriate support for all the children, especially those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The proprietor has ensured that the school meets The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, schedule 1 ('the Regulations').

What the school could do to improve further

While not required by regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- improve pupils' rate of progress in writing
- improve the quality of written marking and feedback so that pupils know the target they are working towards, how well they have achieved and precisely what they need to do next to improve their work.

Inspection judgements

Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
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The quality of education

Overall quality of education		✓		
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils		✓		
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs		✓		
How well pupils make progress in their learning		✓		

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	✓			
The behaviour of pupils	✓			

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils	✓			
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The quality of the Early Years Foundation Stage provision

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage		✓		
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage		✓		
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage		✓		
Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage		✓		

School details

School status	Independent		
Type of school	Primary		
Date school opened	1914		
Age range of pupils	0-11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 15	Girls: 22	Total: 37
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 11	Girls: 13	Total: 24
Number of children aged 0–3 in registered childcare provision	Boys: 23	Girls: 23	Total: 46
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 1	Girls: 0	Total: 1
Annual fees (day pupils)	£6,330		
Annual fees (childcare)	£10,722		
Address of school	28 Priory Road, Dunstable LU5 4HR		
Telephone number	01582 661471		
Email address	info@stgeorgesdunstable.co.uk		
Headteacher	Mrs Karen Newman		
Proprietor	Mrs Patricia Plater		