

# George Street Primary

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	117106
<b>Local Authority</b>	HERTFORDSHIRE LA
<b>Inspection number</b>	312492
<b>Inspection dates</b>	28–29 November 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Philip Mann HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	218
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr J Cregan
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr B Mellor
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7 June 2004
<b>School address</b>	George Street Hemel Hempstead HP2 5HJ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01442 255638
<b>Fax number</b>	01442 262720

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

George Street Primary School is average in size and located in a mixed residential area of Hemel Hempstead with some social and economic disadvantage. The children's starting points in the nursery are generally below what is usually found at this age. A below average number of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the proportion learning English as an additional language is small. The number of pupils entitled to free school meals is broadly average but fluctuates from year to year. The school has recently experienced some difficulty in maintaining a stable complement of teaching staff and coping with the absence of the headteacher through long-term illness.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

The overall effectiveness of George Street Primary is satisfactory and generally reflected in the school's appraisal of itself. Leadership and management of the school are satisfactory overall. The headteacher has established a satisfactorily inclusive school community to which pupils respond well and many parents value it greatly. Pupils make satisfactory progress overall to achieve average standards by the end of Key Stage 2. However, the absence of rigorous and systematic monitoring procedures has meant that inconsistencies in the quality of education exist and this is hampering the staff in raising the achievement and standards of pupils further. Recent initiatives have demonstrated a satisfactory capacity for these deficiencies to be rectified.

Pupils display positive attitudes towards learning and this is especially so when teaching is of good quality. They are attentive in lessons and persevere with their tasks but too often handwriting and work in books is untidy. Older pupils display a sense of responsibility, willingly undertaking jobs that assist in the smooth running of the school. Behaviour in lessons, around the school and outside in the playground is good. Many pupils state that there is very little bullying because staff respond quickly to their concerns. They all value the headteacher's firm but fair approach and sense of fun.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory with some emerging strengths at the end of each key stage. Classroom assistants play an essential part in all lessons. However, inconsistencies in teachers' planning, assessment and classroom management remain, resulting in variations in the progress some pupils make. The curriculum is satisfactory with sufficient focus placed on the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. Pupils are provided with a wide range of practical activities that make learning interesting and relevant for them. This is particularly so in mathematics and science where older pupils make better progress than in English. Activities after school and visits to places of interest further enrich the experiences of all. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is strong. Satisfactory levels of care, guidance and support are provided. While personal support for all pupils, including the most vulnerable, is good, their academic guidance is not strong enough. No formal assessment policy is available to staff to ensure consistency of approach.

Leadership and management of the school are satisfactory overall. Leaders at all levels work with a common purpose to provide opportunities for pupils to achieve. However, insufficient monitoring by the headteacher has led to inconsistencies in provision and weaknesses in some internal procedures. In contrast, school governance is good. Governors know the school well, value the work of the headteacher and fully recognise that a deputy is needed to complement his skills. Taking all factors into account the school provides satisfactory value for money.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Provision in the Foundation Stage is good. Attainment on entry to the nursery varies from year to year but is generally below average in communication, language and literacy. By the end of the Reception year, standards are broadly in line with expected goals, indicating good progress. The quality of provision is good, so pupils come into class happily and quickly begin exploring the stimulating learning environment. Parents are welcomed into the classrooms each morning to participate in the activities, making a particularly positive start to the day. Staff show great skill when working alongside children and are sensitive to their needs, planning activities that

are based on careful observations of the children's learning. As a result, children are fully absorbed in what they do. They showed good levels of independence and perseverance when engaged in activities. Staff model respectful relationships, creating a safe environment for learning. Arrangements to ensure safety and encourage healthy lifestyles are good.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Use systematic monitoring and self-evaluation more effectively to raise standards and improve the quality of education.
- Improve the quality of pupils' handwriting and presentation of work.
- Devise and implement a policy for assessment, feedback and marking.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Pupils make generally adequate progress across the school from below average starting points when they start in the Foundation Stage. Teacher assessments for Key Stage 1, the unvalidated results for the 2007 national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 and the latest teacher assessments indicate that the trend is now upward. Pupils in Year 6 attained standards in their tests that were below average in English but average in mathematics and science. Analysis of data indicates that boys do not achieve as well as girls in writing, although no other significant differences in achievement between groups is evident. The issue is now being addressed through carefully targeted work. The school has set challenging targets for the current Year 6 to attain in 2008.

Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because tasks and support are carefully matched to individual need. Those pupils who speak English as an additional language make equally good progress as a result of the effective partnership between school staff and those from the local authority.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Personal development and well-being are good. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are satisfactory overall, though moral and social development are stronger than spiritual and cultural. Attendance rates are broadly in line with those found nationally. Pupils enjoy coming to school and commented that, 'teachers make lessons fun'. Pupils behave very well in lessons and during playtimes. In lessons, pupils pay attention and are keen to learn but handwriting and work in books is often untidy. Pupils feel safe in school and show great confidence in their teachers' ability to sort out problems, should they arise. They can confidently describe the features of a healthy lifestyle. They make good contributions to the local community, such as through carol singing, and regularly support events to raise money for various charities. They take on roles to support the school, such as peer mediators and class monitors, and participate in the Pupil Voice group. They respond well to the many opportunities to take on responsibility, such as organising the music for assembly and contribute to the community through a range of charity and local events.

Progress in numeracy, literacy and information and communication technology (ICT) makes a satisfactory contribution to future economic well-being.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Several good lessons were observed during the inspection at the end of each key stage but recruitment difficulties and insufficient monitoring have led to inconsistencies in practice in other year groups. Several parents expressed a concern about these inconsistencies. Planning for most lessons is detailed and, in nearly all classes, work is carefully matched to the ability of the pupils. Most teachers make clear to pupils what they will be learning and in the best lessons involve pupils in the assessment of what they have achieved. Classroom assistants make an important contribution to lessons by providing effective levels of support to those pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those needing extra support and care. In the best lessons, teachers fully engage pupils, use resources well and make learning practical and fun. Slow pace and insufficient match of task to the ability of pupils are common factors in the small proportion of otherwise satisfactory lessons. In the one inadequate lesson seen, pupils became bored and restless because the activity was too mundane. Marking is satisfactory overall but inconsistent in quality. It is developing well in some classes where teachers provide good levels of guidance to pupils in what they need to do next to improve.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

Curriculum provision is satisfactory. Whilst pupils state they generally enjoy their learning, especially when using ICT or taking part in physical education, planning and monitoring of the curriculum are not yet sufficiently developed to ensure consistency across the school. The curriculum includes a satisfactory focus on developing pupils' basic skills in English and mathematics. Provision for ICT has been enhanced by the recent investment in new equipment, resulting in greater access for all pupils. Pupils' personal development and enjoyment are promoted well through a good range of additional activities and visitors to the school. Teachers and teaching assistants ensure that pupils new to the school, pupils from minority ethnic groups and those with learning difficulties enjoy full access to the curriculum

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 3**

The quality of academic guidance and support is satisfactory, because the quality of marking and feedback to pupils is too variable. Furthermore, information is not always used well enough to set challenging targets for pupils and there is no formal policy for assessment. Nevertheless, staff support pupils' personal welfare well and pupils with social and emotional difficulties are effectively identified and given relevant additional support. Most staff model respectful behaviour towards pupils and create a supportive ethos for learning. Pupils report a good level of racial harmony at the school. Child protection procedures are in place. The school takes the health and safety of its pupils seriously, ensuring necessary risk assessments are regularly made. Appropriate checks on staff are undertaken and properly recorded.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

Leadership and management are adequate overall. Day to day management is satisfactory. Pupils respond well to the positive and inclusive climate for learning that is evident around the school. Comments such as, 'Pupils actually care about each other and take a pride in their school,' represent the views of many parents. The tireless work of middle managers maintained this positive feature during the headteacher's period of illness. The re-establishment of a senior management team on his return has led to some improvements but the governing body has recognised the need to appoint a deputy to complement the headteacher's particular strengths and skills.

The provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is led and managed well. Subject leadership for mathematics is an example of good practice but recruitment difficulties have led to inconsistencies in the leadership of other subject areas. The creation of subject leadership teams this term is a positive move forward. Despite some isolated pockets of good practice, current procedures for monitoring and evaluating the school are inadequate. These lack the necessary rigour to resolve inconsistencies in practice, to bring about improvements and raise standards.

School governance is good. The governing body has developed a very clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Resources are being used efficiently to improve facilities and strengthen the school's management structure. Progress on the issues from the previous inspection is evident and capacity for further improvement is satisfactory.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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### Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

### Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

30 November 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of George Street Primary School, Hemel Hempstead, HP2 5HJ

I would like to thank you all on behalf of the inspection team for making us feel so welcome during our time with you. It was good to see you all working in class, playing happily in the playground and behaving well in lessons and around the school.

Many of you stated that you are glad to see Mr Mellor back after his illness last term because he always listens to your concerns and tries to ensure that the school is a happy place where you can learn. The inspectors also think this is so and this contributes to the progress you all make. They also are pleased to see that you behave well in lessons and around the school. In the best lessons, the inspectors noted that pupils made good progress in their work. However, inspectors feel that improvements in the school are needed to ensure that all of you make good progress no matter what class you are in. This is something that Mr Mellor and the senior staff are going to ensure happens in the future by observing lessons more regularly and helping teachers to improve.

Teachers are also going to help you make better progress by marking your work carefully and pointing out what you should do to improve. In turn, you can always try to pay attention to what they say and make sure that your handwriting and work in your books are as neat as possible.

The governors work hard as a team to provide your headteacher and staff with all the support they need to ensure that the school runs smoothly. They make regular visits into the school and this gives them a good understanding of what works well and what needs further improvement.

Once again, I enjoyed visiting your school and wish you all the very best for the future,

Philip Mann HMI