

# St George's School

Independent School

Inspection report

DCSF Registration Number	820/6007
Unique Reference Number	109723
Inspection number	320007
Inspection dates	27-28 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Jim Henry

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002 (as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005).

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Alexandra House  
33 Kingsway  
London WC2B 6SE  
T 08456 404040

[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)



## 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, in order to advise the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

## Information about the school

St Georges is a non-selective, co-educational school for pupils aged 2-11. Children under 4 years are registered in the Nursery, 'Little Steps', which is on the same site. The school was opened in 1914 and is situated in Dunstable, Bedfordshire. There are five classes with 101 pupils currently on roll. The school aims 'to be a happy, caring school with a holistic approach to education.'

## Evaluation of the school

St George's provides a good quality of education and parents are pleased with the good quality of care and support that their children receive. The broad and balanced curriculum ensures that the school meets its aim of educating the 'whole child'. Individual assessments ensure that pupils make good progress. Pupils have a positive attitude to their learning and this is reflected in the good relationships between staff and pupils. They leave the school well prepared academically and socially for their next stage of education. All but two regulations are met.

## Quality of education

The curriculum is good and meets the needs of all pupils. The school follows the National Curriculum in Key Stages 1 and 2 and this is supplemented by the teaching of French across all year groups. The different subjects are effectively linked together to engage and encourage pupils learning. Topics such as 'Light and Dark' are used to develop the pupils' knowledge and skills in literacy, science and art. The school has dedicated weeks on specific aspects of the curriculum. An example is the literacy week where a variety of activities were used to stimulate and enrich the pupil's interest in writing. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used satisfactorily across the curriculum, although the school recognises that there is a lack of ICT resources in the classrooms. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are fully included in lessons and the curriculum is adapted to meet their needs. National Foundation Stage guidance is effectively used for the children in the Reception class. The formal curriculum and pupils' learning are enhanced through a range of activities such as residential trips and local visits. The pupils have the opportunity to develop their speaking and listening skills through links with the Spoken English Board. After school clubs such as ballet, music, netball, rugby, and links with Luton Football Association further enhance pupils' experiences.

The provision in the curriculum for personal development is good with pupils helping to support each other through responsibilities such as 'reading buddies'. St George's has successfully integrated pupils who may have found a larger school stressful.

The quality of teaching is good. The staff know pupils on an individual level and work hard to ensure that each one's needs are met. Pupils are assessed using statutory National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. While the numbers in the class were very small, results at the end of Year 2 in 2007 showed that pupils' attainment was above the national average in reading and maths and in-line in writing. Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 in 2007 was significantly above the national average in English, mathematics and science. Individual assessments show that pupils make good progress during their time at St George's and a tracking system has just been introduced to monitor pupils' progress using optional National Curriculum tests and teacher assessments. However, this has yet to give the school an oversight of the progress pupils make across different age groups and in English and mathematics. Pupils are taught in small groups and this allows staff to give them individual attention and develop their thinking skills. For example, in a mathematics lesson, games were used to improve pupils' mental calculation. This made the lesson move at a good, lively pace and pupils were fully engaged in their learning. While teachers effectively support pupils and encourage independent learning, where lessons were too teacher-led, learning was less effective.

A strength of St George's is the good relationships throughout the school. Pupils thought they were taught well and one commented 'If you don't understand the teachers will help you make sure that you do'. As a result, pupils have a good attitude to their learning and they are very responsive and clearly enjoy school. 'Lessons are fun' was an observation of one pupil and this is reflected in the neatness and good presentation of work. Teachers mark work conscientiously with good use of praise to celebrate pupils' achievement. However, in some instances, it does not sufficiently inform pupils what they have to do to improve further.

## Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Staff place a high priority on helping them to grow in confidence. One parent wrote in the questionnaire, 'My daughter has flourished and is a happy confident child'. Good relationships and a well-structured behaviour code ensure that all pupils know how they are expected to behave. As a result pupils feel safe in school and are polite, friendly and show kindness and concern for others. Behaviour is good and the presence of good role models in the school helps pupils develop a strong sense of right and wrong. A daily assembly effectively involves pupils and encourages them to celebrate the school's Christian ethos as well as recognising and celebrating the festivals of other faiths. During the inspection, a parent shared her Hindu faith and culture in an assembly. This was an enjoyable and informative event that captured the pupils' imagination. It gave pupils a good awareness of another culture and faith and challenged them to discover more about Hinduism. The school plans visits to

local organisations caring for the elderly and has a range of visitors speaking to pupils in order to effectively promote their moral, social and cultural development. Pupils make a positive contribution to the community. They are aware of the needs of others less fortunate than themselves and participate enthusiastically in supporting a range of charities, such as the NSPCC. Attendance is good, however, despite the good endeavours of the school, a few pupils are frequently late. This disrupts lessons and affects their learning and that of their classmates. Pupils are encouraged to eat healthy food and they understand why exercise and a healthy lifestyle are important. Pupils are well prepared for their future economic well being by learning the skills they need to be fully literate and numerate.

## Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The school makes good provision for the welfare, health and safety of the pupils. It is a safe place in which to work and learn. Health and safety and behaviour policies are implemented effectively. The school is aware of the latest guidance for safeguarding children and matters relating to the care and protection of pupils are complete and kept under regular review. The school is vigilant with regard to fire safety. Very careful risk assessments are carried out before each visit outside school and a member of staff trained in matters of health and safety is preparing detailed risk assessments for all areas of the school. A number of staff are well trained in first aid and accidents are recorded diligently. Pupils are very well supervised at all times. The school does not have a policy with regard to the Disability Discrimination Act 2002 and has yet to devise a three-year accessibility plan.

## Suitability of the proprietor and staff

Procedures are in place to check the suitability of all staff to work with children and a single central record is in place.

## School's premises and accommodation

The school is situated in a residential area in two semi-detached houses that have been converted into one. This provides an effective environment in which pupils can learn, although there are no dedicated facilities for children who are ill. It has adequate areas at the rear to provide suitable space for the pupils to play and this is enhanced by play facilities such as wooden decking and a role play shed that acts as a florist shop. The limited size of the site means that pupils use nearby facilities for games, swimming and other activities. There is a room specifically for the use of computers but the school recognises that further ICT facilities are needed in classrooms.

## Provision of information for parents, carers and others

Parents, carers and others are kept well informed and given clear information through the prospectus and newsletters. Responses from parents in the pre-inspection questionnaires were very supportive of the school and the overwhelming

majority feel that their children are well cared for and are making good progress. Parents receive two written reports a year about their children's progress and the school holds regular consultation evenings for parents.

## Procedures for handling complaints

The school has an effective complaints procedure that is communicated to parents and meets the requirements. There have been no formal complaints received by the school in the last academic year.

## Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended January 2005, with the exception of those listed below.

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the premises and accommodation (standard 5) and must:

- provide appropriate facilities for ill children in accordance with the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 (paragraph 5(l)).

In order to comply with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2002 the school should devise a three-year accessibility plan.

## What the school could do to improve further

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

- Develop the pupil tracking to effectively monitor and evaluate pupils' progress across the school in English and maths in order to raise standards.
- Improve the consistency of marking to inform pupils how to further improve.

## School details

Name of school	St George's School		
DCSF number	820/6007		
Unique reference number	109723		
Type of school	Primary		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	1914		
Age range of pupils	2-11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 31	Girls: 34	Total: 65
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 19	Girls: 17	Total: 36
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 2	Girls: 0	Total: 2
Annual fees (day pupils)	£ 5,400		
Address of school	28 Priory Road Dunstable Bedfordshire LU5 4HR		
Telephone number	01582 661471		
Fax number	01582 663605		
Email address	info@stgeorgesdunstable.co.uk		
Headteacher	Mrs P Plater		
Proprietor	Mrs P Plater		
Reporting inspector	Jim Henry		
Dates of inspection	27-28 February 2008		