

St Mary's Church of England Primary School, West Derby

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104624
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	377105
Inspection dates	15–16 March 2012
Lead inspector	Andrew Morley

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	211
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev Mark Coleman
Headteacher	Eddie Flood
Date of previous school inspection	1 November 2006
School address	Meadow Lane Liverpool L12 5EA
Telephone number	0151 226 2038
Fax number	0151 256 5963
Email address	marys-ht@st-maryswestderby.liverpool.sch.uk



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Introduction

Inspection team

Andrew Morley
Vanessa MacDonald

Additional inspector
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector observed 10 lessons or part-lessons, taught by seven members of staff, including a teaching assistant. Meetings were held with pupils, three members of the governing body, subject leaders and senior staff. The inspector observed the school's work, and looked at pupils' workbooks, internal and external pupil progress data, school improvement planning and documentation in relation to safeguarding and child protection. The inspector also took account of 85 questionnaires returned by parents and carers, and those completed by pupils and by teaching and support staff. No responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) were available when planning the inspection.

Information about the school

St Mary's is of average size for a primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. The school draws a significant number of pupils from further afield than the local area. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is below average. There are very few pupils from minority ethnic groups. The school has achieved National Healthy School status and is active within a local cluster of primary schools. The school meets the current floor standard, the government's minimum expectation for pupil's attainment at the end of Year 6.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory and 4 is inadequate
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall Effectiveness	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- This is a good school. It is well led and managed. Central to its success are the very caring relationships within a warm environment that promote pupils' good overall achievement and mature behaviour. There is a clear trend of improvement in attainment. The school is not yet outstanding because of pupils' progress, especially in mathematics, and aspects of teaching require further improvement.
- Overall, pupils achieve well. Progress is stronger in English, particularly in writing in Key Stage 1 and reading in Key Stage 2, than in mathematics. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress. Children are now achieving more in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Overall, teaching is good and has many strengths. The relationships pupils have with each other and with adults in school are strong, resulting in orderly lessons. However, pupils do not have enough opportunities to use and apply their basic skills and knowledge across subjects; this is particularly the case in mathematics. Marking is regular but in mathematics it does not always sufficiently guide pupils on their next steps in learning. Pupils are not consistently challenged to assess their own work.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils are very polite, respectful and caring. They engage well with their learning and speak confidently. They say they feel very safe, bullying does not occur and are confident that staff deal with any worries. Pupils enjoy school and this is reflected in improved attendance which is now consistently above average.
- Leadership is good. The governing body, headteacher and all staff share a clear vision for the school; the school's own evaluation is accurate. There is effective management of performance, with actions taken to resolve weaker aspects. Leaders have effectively improved provision and achievement in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The leadership of teaching is strong although a few shortcomings remain.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve further pupils' attainment and progress, particularly in mathematics, through ensuring that teaching is at least good and increasingly outstanding by:
 - providing pupils with more opportunities to use and apply basic skills and knowledge across a range of subjects
 - ensuring the marking of pupils' work in mathematics provides focused guidance for the next steps in learning
 - giving pupils, particularly the more able, more responsibility to assess their own progress and that of their peers in mathematics.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils look forward to their lessons and are eager to learn. Their behaviour and enthusiasm to do well and succeed makes a strong contribution to their effective learning in lessons and good progress. They enjoy their lessons and cooperate well with staff and each other. The work in pupils' books, observations in lessons and tracking data show that pupils are making good progress from their starting points. They have good information and communication technology (ICT) skills and use computers with confidence. Similarly, they have well developed basic skills. However, they are not consistently provided with opportunities to apply these skills in a range of subjects. When given the opportunity, pupils demonstrate a significant capacity to collaborate and support each other in their learning and improve progress.

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills in communication, language, literacy and mathematics which are typical of those expected for their age. As a result of improved provision, children are now making good progress and start Year 1 with at least the expected skills and knowledge in all areas of learning. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment is above average overall, with the strongest performance in writing. Good progress continues into Key Stage 2 with overall attainment being above the national average. Attainment in English is consistently above the national average. Attainment in mathematics is not consistently as high as English because progress is variable between classes and not all, especially the more able, make enough progress. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good overall progress because of the focused support they receive.

Reading has a high priority in the school. Pupils show increasing enthusiasm for reading and many read independently at home. Lessons about letters and the sounds they make are taught systematically on a daily basis. Pupils are very enthusiastic about reading and enjoy the many opportunities that the school provides, both within class and at home. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment in reading is above average with many pupils displaying high levels of fluency, and most can read complex vocabulary. At Key Stage 2 and by the end of Year 6, pupils are confident and fluent readers and their attainment in reading is above, and sometimes well above, average.

The vast majority of parents and carers who returned the questionnaires are happy with the progress their children make and agree with inspectors that it is good.

Quality of teaching

The quality of teaching is good overall, with staff and pupils working together to ensure that classrooms are interesting and stimulating environments in which to learn. The environment for the Early Years Foundation Stage is bright and welcoming. It ensures children quickly feel safe, secure and ready to explore the variety of exciting and well-planned activities. Good relationships with their teachers and with other children ensure that they settle quickly and become confident learners. Pupils happily work together, sharing and taking turns. As a result of good teaching and a curriculum which provides a balance between activities chosen by pupils and those led by adults, pupils are beginning to make good progress in all areas of learning. The recently developed outdoor area provides a stimulating space and is used effectively by the children to develop their imagination and explore learning independently.

Teaching across Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 is similarly good and improving; there are examples of good practice in all classes. The best lessons are enhanced by the detailed subject knowledge of teachers and teaching assistants. Teachers are very skilled in their questioning strategies and show great respect in valuing pupils' responses. Stimulating resources, including for ICT, are used effectively and contribute strongly to pupils' motivation and engagement. Teachers are increasingly providing opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning. For example, in a Year 2 class, pupils were challenged to design their own experiment in an activity to develop their understanding of forces. In a Year 4 mathematics lesson, pupils were given some basic information and challenged to work cooperatively to solve a problem. However, in this subject such opportunities are not consistently evident in all classes. In some lessons, particularly in mathematics where teaching is less effective, there is a lack of challenge, teachers are over-directive and take too long to provide information, which slows the pace of learning. In mathematics, the marking of pupils' work is inconsistent from class to class, and guidance on how pupils could improve their work is limited. Pupils are confident and use their targets but are not challenged or provided with opportunities to assess their own or others' work and to take responsibility for their own progress.

Teachers use the curriculum effectively to ensure that basic skills and knowledge are taught. However, teachers are not consistently providing sufficient opportunities for pupils to practise and develop their mathematical skills in meaningful contexts in subjects across the curriculum. Teaching promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively and mutual respect abounds. The majority of questionnaires returned by parents and carers understandably reflected their high level of satisfaction with the quality of teaching their children receive.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

This is a very caring community. Behaviour was good at all times during the inspection and this reflects the usual standard of behaviour. Pupils show a high level of respect, care and engagement with other pupils and staff. All groups of pupils speak with confidence and emphasise that they felt safe in school. As one pupil said; 'We have to be safe, sensible and smiling.' The older children understand their responsibility to model good behaviour and safe practice. The play leaders show great maturity in their role to ensure that younger children are looked after on the playground and around school. Pupils enjoy playtimes, which are very happy and secure for all. At all times pupils are calm, orderly and considerate. When in

class they understand that they are there to learn. This ensures that all lessons flow smoothly and there were no examples of pupils being distracted from tasks.

Pupils are unanimous in their rejection of bullying in any form. They say that the school teaches them about what forms bullying can take and the dangers of each. Pupils appreciate the emphasis the school places on their safety and happiness and make particular mention of the support they receive from adults when they have worries or are unhappy. This is aided by the good health promotion and personal development work throughout the school. The great majority of parents and carers who returned the questionnaires expressed the view that their children believe they are safe and well cared for in school and that behaviour is good. A typical comment was, 'There is a strong family feel within the school. The children are taught the importance of respecting others and good values and this is reflected in their behaviour.' Pupils are happy, confident and secure and this is reflected in their above average attendance.

Leadership and management

Leaders, staff, the governing body, parents and carers share a strong vision to improve all aspects of the school's work. It is very much a team approach and, as a result, all staff feel valued and included in bringing about change. As one staff member states, 'In the last three years we have really developed as a team, sharing in the responsibility to ensure the very best for our children.' Pupils' progress is tracked robustly and staff held accountable for the progress their pupils make. Leaders monitor teaching thoroughly and provide staff with feedback clearly focused on the progress of pupils, at the individual, group and class level. The emphasis on targeted professional development improves the quality of teaching across the school and only minor shortcomings remain. Professional development is further enhanced by activity within a local cluster of schools and other support groups. Accurate self-evaluation leads to prompt actions to improve weaker aspects and the rising trend in attainment and progress reflect good capacity to improve.

The governing body is fully supportive and fully aware of areas in need of further improvement. The school promotes equality of opportunity well overall and has effective strategies to tackle discrimination. Safeguarding and child protection arrangements are secure, regularly reviewed, and fully meet requirements. Engagement and communication with parents and carers are good, and as a result, an overwhelming proportion of parents and carers appreciate the dedication and contribution of the school and its staff. The school has strong links with the local church and is active within the local community.

Effective leadership ensures the curriculum is broad and balanced. Pupils appreciate a good variety of extra-curricular and enrichment activities, which are popular and well attended. Pupils enjoy lessons to develop enterprise skills, appreciate a whole range of trips and visitors, and are proud to represent their school in sporting and musical events. Years 5 and 6 pupils spoke with great appreciation of the specialist French teaching and the visit to France. The key skills of reading, writing and numeracy are appropriately prioritised within the curriculum. However, there is a lack of thoroughness in planning systematically for the teaching of these basic skills across a range of subjects, particularly in mathematics. The impact of the curriculum on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Assemblies are a good example in which pupils are provided the time to reflect on how they can contribute to the happiness of others.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



19 March 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Mary's Church of England Primary School, West Derby, Liverpool, L12 5EA

Thank you for the friendly welcome you gave the inspectors and for being so polite and kind when we inspected your school. We enjoyed meeting you and seeing you enjoying learning and the many interesting things you do.

The inspectors judge that your school is good and that you are making good progress. Your teachers are working to help you in your learning and it was pleasing to see the improvement that you have made. You are doing really well with your reading and the help you have at home is clear from what your parents and carers write in your reading records. Your behaviour in class is good and the play leaders are doing a good job in looking after the younger children on the playground. We very much liked the way in which you made sure that everyone was cared for. You know how to stay safe and many of you told us how much your teachers care about you.

The headteacher, staff and governors are working to help you do even better. To help them in this we have asked them to ensure that all your lessons are at least good and that you make as good progress in mathematics as you do in English, we have also asked them to give you more opportunities to practise your reading, writing and especially mathematics when you work in other subjects. Also we have asked the teachers to make sure that they give you more opportunities to check and think about your work when it is completed.

Once again, thank you for making us so welcome. You are all a credit to your school. Keep on being kind to each other and help your teachers and work hard.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Morley
Lead inspector

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