

St Mary's C of E Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109212
Local Authority	Bath and North East Somerset
Inspection number	356500
Inspection dates	25–26 May 2011
Reporting inspector	Mo Roberts HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	80
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Frances Butt
Headteacher	Mrs Sue Jones
Date of previous school inspection	8 May 2008
School address	Old Road Writhlington Radstock BA3 3NG
Telephone number	01761 434548
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an additional inspector. They observed eight part lessons as well as groups working with teaching assistants; five teachers were observed and meetings were held with groups of pupils, representatives of the governing body and staff. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of school documentation, including the governing body minutes, child protection policy and the school development plan. Inspectors spoke informally with parents and carers before school and by phone and also analysed 24 parental questionnaires as well as those submitted by staff and pupils.

Information about the school

St Mary's is smaller than the average sized primary school and currently works in collaboration with Farrington Gurney Primary School, under the leadership of an Executive Headteacher. The school also had a period of collaboration with a larger local primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is declining but is still above average. The school holds the Basic Skills Mark and has Eco and Healthy School Status. The government targets have been met during the past three years. There is an on-site pre-school with a separate inspection report; it is not currently run by the governing body, although this is subject to consultation. The Early Years Foundation Stage has links with the pre-school and has a new outdoor learning area.

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	2
Teaching	2
Leadership and management	2
Behaviour and safety	2
Does the school adequately promote the pupils' well-being?	Yes
Does the school adequately promote community cohesion?	Yes
Does the school provide value for money?	Yes

Key findings

- Pupils' overall achievement is good because the school is a thriving educational community with good support for pupils of all levels of ability.
- There have been significant improvements in all areas of the school over the last 18 months, due to the good leadership of the executive headteacher and her deputy.
- Teaching is good overall, and two outstanding lessons were observed. Pupils make a really good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and older classes are successfully overcoming the legacy of past underachievement; especially in the quality of pupils' writing.
- Pupils' behaviour is good and pupils are clear about what is acceptable and what will result in sanctions. They see the system as fair and are keen to be awarded their 'golden time' for doing their best.
- The school's safety procedures are good, including for child protection. Pupils reported feeling happy and safe at school and are clearly enjoying their education as well as all the extra activities on offer.
- The attractive sensory garden enhances the pupils' appreciation of nature and their sense of awe and wonder. The school's spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is strong overall.
- The school's systems for recording and analysing pupils' attainment and progress lack precision.
- The youngest pupils in the new mixed Year 1 and 2 class do not have quite enough activities that encourage them to learn through practical experience rather than by listening to explanations.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

- Improve the recording and analysis of the pupils' progress data to ensure it is easier for all teachers and senior leaders to see:
 - where any individual pupil is falling behind
 - to identify any trends that need attention in any particular group
 - help the assessment leader to swiftly and easily identify patterns and issues at either school in the collaboration.

- Ensure younger pupils in Key Stage 1 have increased access to more active learning to help them make better progress.

Main report

St Mary's is a good school where a determined and enthusiastic staff team are tackling pupils' past underachievement successfully. Every effort is made to ensure pupils learn to read fluently and with good understanding and improve their attainment rapidly in writing and mathematics. At the same time, they ensure pupils develop as rounded individuals. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is given a high priority. This results in pupils who not only behave well but know why it is important, in school and in our wider society, that they all participate and help.

Teaching is good and pupils' learning in all classes is good. For example, during the inspection, Years 5 and 6 were involved in a short drama presentation considering how their future teenage selves might be taunted by peers to start smoking. They then used scientific facts to write a letter to remind themselves of the dangers involved. This resulted in some very good persuasive writing. Throughout the school, pupils' health is really well promoted. Year 1 enjoyed an active approach when searching around the school for cards with riddles to help them identify and find different fruit. This activity stimulated discussion and was more effective than when they listened to longer teacher introductions which slightly exceeded their maturity levels for listening. Good attention is given to the introduction of a lively phonics approach in the Early Years Foundation Stage and strong ongoing support is given to pupils in all classes where needed. Average reading levels when pupils are six years old are at the expected national level, but this is less securely so with their writing. Pupils reach the national average level in reading by the time they leave the school and this year pupils' writing books have some pieces of written work at the advanced level in writing (Level 5), which is a significant improvement over past years. These results reflect the detailed assessment and focused work that teachers have undertaken throughout the school to improve pupils' accuracy and skills. Their planning is very carefully matched to the needs of the different pupils in their classes. Mathematics is also consistently well taught and this is allowing pupils to close the gap with national expectations.

It is clearly evident that all pupils are being well challenged and supported to achieve their potential, irrespective of their ability. Pupils know and use their targets for improvement well. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities make

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good and occasionally outstanding progress, due to the carefully tailored support and good monitoring they receive.

The youngest pupils especially benefit from an attractive outdoor learning area and a wide range of stimulating activities both outside and indoors. Those that are below age-related expectations on entry begin to narrow the gap with their peers well. Their individual records of progress are a joy to read and show how activities are carefully structured to lead to rapid learning and high levels of enjoyment.

The pupils' behaviour throughout the inspection was good and records show few problems or incidents in the last year. The behaviour management system works well. The school is a safe environment, with all required policies and procedures in place. Any staff training needs are identified and dealt with promptly. The governors have also been proactive and are effectively ensuring they keep up to date. The school has clear anti-bullying initiatives and both older and younger pupils know what to do if an issue arises and are confident that all adults in the school would help. Parents and carers are pleased with the improvements in behaviour and almost all have confidence in the school to attend to their children's emotional needs as well as their safety. Pupils agreed that younger pupils may need an additional 'easy way' to alert staff to any potential bullying in that age group and they have some useful suggestions to discuss with the school council about this.

Leaders and managers have effectively galvanised the school to address past weaknesses, hence the improved behaviour, consistently higher quality teaching and the accurate pupil targets. This is all helping all pupils' rates of learning to improve and clearly supports their equal opportunities effectively. It has taken some time to resolve the leadership issues and gain a stable and sustainable arrangement but this is now established. Leadership skills are applied across both schools to good effect although the progress tracking system is a little unwieldy and does not yet integrate all the key data sufficiently well. The rapid development of the new Early Years Foundation Stage class and the outdoor provision for all pupils are just two ways in which the school demonstrates its strong capacity for further development. There is a real ambition and drive evident in the whole staff team and they know exactly how their school is doing and where to target further improvements. The governing body supports the school well. This united approach models good social behaviour for the pupils and staff strongly lead the Christian ethos of the school. They also ensure pupils have a good knowledge of other faiths and cultures. It is the extra things, including participating in cultural and sports events, such as singing in a festival in Bath, which pupils and their parents and carers especially appreciate. The small staff team works very hard to offer such a good variety of extra clubs and activities. These help develop confident and well-rounded young people ready for the next stage of their education.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Mary’s C of E Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 24 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 80 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
Q1 My child is happy at school	14	58	10	42	0	0	0	0
Q2 My child feels safe at school	11	46	12	50	1	4	0	0
Q3 The school helps my child to achieve as well as they can	15	63	8	33	0	0	0	0
Q4 The school meets my child’s particular needs	12	50	11	46	0	0	0	0
Q5 The school ensures my child is well looked after	13	54	10	42	1	4	0	0
Q6 Teaching at this school is good	15	63	9	38	0	0	0	0
Q7 There is a good standard of behaviour at this school	5	21	14	58	5	21	0	0
Q8 Lessons are not disrupted by bad behaviour	3	13	18	75	1	4	1	4
Q9 The school deals with any cases of bullying well	4	17	10	42	4	17	1	4
Q10 The school helps me to support my child’s learning	11	46	12	50	1	4	0	0
Q11 The school responds to my concerns and keeps me well informed	8	33	13	54	0	0	1	4
Q12 The school is well led and managed	11	46	10	42	0	0	1	4

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

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	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 December 2010 and 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.

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

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on 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 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:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The achievement of all pupils. ■ Behaviour and safety. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The effectiveness of leadership and management. <p>and taking into consideration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ how well the school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
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.

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.



27 May 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Mary's C of E Primary School, Radstock BA3 3NG

Thank you for the warm welcome and the help you gave us when we visited your school. We enjoyed seeing all your activities. We also liked talking to you in class and when some of you came in groups to speak to us. Thank you for filling in the pupils' questionnaire. It was good to find out how much you enjoy school. We agree with you that you go to a good school. These are some of the best things about your school.

- The youngest children get off to a good start in their learning especially with their letter sounds and in the new outdoor area.
- Your school is a happy community because you behave well and you know how to keep fit and healthy and safe.
- You all have good opportunities to do lots of exciting things because the lessons are exciting and there are lots of extra clubs and sports to help you enjoy school life.
- Your reading is good.
- You listen and learn well in your lessons because they are interesting and lively, and this means that you are making more progress than before and getting closer to the national standards in mathematics and writing.
- Your executive headteacher and deputy headteacher, together with your teachers and the governing body, have really improved your school and are always looking for ways to do more.
- All adults look after you well and bullying will not be tolerated.

So that your school gets even better, we have asked the teachers to do two things. First, to improve the way they track your progress; their computer program doesn't do all the things that would help them. Second, we want them to check there are enough active things for Year 1 to do and explore so they have lots to write and talk about.

Please help by remembering to fill in your reading record books. I noticed some times you forget. Good luck with your vegetable gardens and when you sing for the other schools.

Yours sincerely

Mo Roberts
Her Majesty's Inspector

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