

St Mary's CofE Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102139
Local Authority	Haringey
Inspection number	376672
Inspection dates	2–3 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Sarah McDermott

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	230
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Clare Goymer
Headteacher	Fran Hargrove
Date of previous school inspection	8–9 March 2007
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Age group	3–7
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The team observed 10 lessons taught by eight teachers. The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. They scrutinised pupils' work and looked at the data the school had collected on pupils' academic progress and attendance. They also looked at the school development plan, investigated procedures for keeping pupils safe and analysed the responses to questionnaires from pupils, staff and 103 parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The extent to which pupils, particularly those who speak English as an additional language, make enough progress in reading.
- The extent to which teaching and the curriculum enable Black African and Black Caribbean pupils to progress at the same rate as other pupils.
- The effectiveness of all leaders and managers in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning and successfully raising the pupils' performance.

Information about the school

This is an average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. Over three quarters of pupils are from minority ethnic groups, predominantly of other White backgrounds or of Black African or Black Caribbean origin. Nearly half of pupils do not speak English as their first language, with few at the early stages of learning the language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average. Their needs mostly relate to speech, language and communication difficulties.

The Early Years Foundation Stage comprises one Nursery class and two Reception classes. Parents are able to pay for extra nursery care beyond the allowance provided by the government. The school manages its own breakfast club and after-school club that formed part of this inspection. The school holds the Healthy Schools Award. It works closely with St Mary's Church of England Junior School.

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: how good is the school?**1****The school's capacity for sustained improvement****2**

Main findings

This is an outstanding school. It provides an exceptional array of activities to inspire and engage the pupils. One parent justifiably commented, 'I am very impressed with the curriculum, especially the way the classroom environment stimulates and enriches the children as well as showcasing some beautiful work.' Teachers find interesting ways to link different parts of the curriculum into fun-packed lessons, yet never lose sight of effective learning. Topics and themes are planned with the interests of pupils in mind, so Black African and Caribbean pupils find learning just as motivating as pupils from White and other backgrounds. Pupils are often out and about investigating local landmarks. They show great artistic talent and proudly display their colourful paintings of the local clock tower and Alexandra Palace. They are very active members of their own school community and, for infant pupils, are remarkably involved in what is going on in the local neighbourhood.

Pupils love coming to school because all staff greet them with a very warm welcome and ensure they are looked after extremely well. One parent added, 'Both my daughters love school – it is so friendly and inclusive and nurturing.' Pupils from a wide range of different ethnic backgrounds all much enjoy their learning. They make good progress and attain high levels in reading, writing and mathematics because teaching is of a consistently good quality. On occasion the higher-attaining pupils do not receive challenging activities. Teachers mark work frequently and give pupils positive verbal feedback, but do not always note in writing that pupils have been given guidance on how to improve their work even more. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are successfully helped to overcome language barriers to reading and writing, so make similarly good progress. The care and attention paid to pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are particularly well organised and very specifically directed. As a result these pupils make exceptional progress. Pupils behave well and know the importance of healthy eating and regular exercise. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding, founded on a strong Christian ethic which successfully encourages all pupils to care for each other and have a very positive outlook on life. The school community is extremely cohesive and is really effective in making those very important first steps in preparing pupils particularly well to socialise and work with people from all walks of life.

The headteacher gives a strong lead. In her first year she has familiarised herself thoroughly with the school and knows clearly what needs improving. She is well supported by a team of senior and middle managers who are ever more accountable

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for attainment, tight record keeping and the quality of teaching and learning in their responsibility areas. Governors give a good strategic lead in financial and premises matters and are increasing their ability to question how different groups of pupils perform academically. Excellent partnerships have been established to promote pupils' learning and guidance. The school provides good quality information to parents and carers and successfully informs them how to help their children's learning from home. The school has good capacity for sustained improvement because it has raised pupils' achievement, met challenging academic targets and improved the provision for information and communication technology (ICT) since the last inspection. As one parent perceptively commented, 'The school has a real feeling of forward momentum.'

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Move the quality of teaching from good to outstanding by:
 - ensuring work is always challenging enough for the higher-attaining pupils
 - adding comments when marking books to note that pupils have understood how to improve their work.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Most pupils arrive in Year 1 with levels of skills above those typically expected for their age. All pupils, whatever their ethnic background or gender, make good progress and over several years have been leaving at the end of Year 2 with high attainment. In 2011 significantly more pupils than nationally attained expected levels; all the more impressive when a third of the year group had learning difficulties. However, only average numbers of pupils attained the higher Level 3 in reading and writing. Observations in lessons and the school's tight data tracking indicate that many current pupils are able learners and are achieving well not only in the core areas of reading, writing and mathematics but also in history, art and ICT.

Pupils thoroughly enjoy school, using words such as 'fantastic', 'super', 'brilliant' and 'I love it' to describe their feelings. Attendance rates have rapidly improved recently and are currently above average. Pupils are well versed in school routines, settling down to learning quickly and eagerly. Lessons are invariably interspersed with pupils' observant comments or keen chatter – all very positive factors of animated learning. However, on occasion lessons can become a little noisy and progress slows. Pupils put good effort into their learning, persevering with challenging concepts. In a Year 1 English lesson, pupils put much thought into how to spell 'are' and 'they', feeling very proud when they successfully 'had a go' and wrote them correctly. Pupils work well together and make the most of talking partners to spark ideas off each other.

Pupils are the key factor in St Mary's very strong community ethos. They welcome new classmates with open arms, helping them if they are at the early stages of learning English or they have learning difficulties. In assemblies, pupils sing with

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panache, but still bow heads quietly for prayer and reflect sensibly on what is right and wrong. Pupils have an extremely well-developed sense of how to keep themselves safe, turning to adults or the playground buddies if they are worried. The many excursions walking in the neighbourhood prepare them very well in road safety. Pupils are active, lively and devour plenty of fruit helping the school achieve Healthy Schools status, although a few do not eat as many green vegetables at lunch as they know they should. They keenly take on small jobs around the school, such as helping in assembly or participating in the school council. Their involvement beyond the school in the Hornsey area is particularly impressive, including planting bulbs in the churchyard and helping to lobby local businesses to support the Christmas fair. For infants, writing letters to the local authority asking for a Christmas tree outside the school or offering suggestions on the school lunch menu shows a very advanced sense of citizenship and democratic rights.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	1
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Teachers make every moment a learning moment through a day well planned to stimulate and engage pupils. From encouraging pupils to recite the alphabet as they settle for a story to gently correcting grammar as they line up for lunch, teachers always pay close attention to making the most of the pupils' time at school. They introduce topics to stretch pupils and have high expectations of their input. One example, the Guy Fawkes theme, successfully introduced firework safety to the pupils. It also effectively resulted in Year 2 pupils being able to recount the origins of bonfire celebrations linking them to King James 1 and his troubles with the Catholics. Younger pupils extend their learning outside very effectively. For example, pupils

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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used their mathematical knowledge to design a building with blocks, write a list of materials needed and even work out how many biscuits were needed for the tea break. The school day is interspersed with plenty of sport, including football, tennis and gymnastics. Teachers make appropriate use of workbooks to reinforce numeracy skills, although on occasion the higher-attainers find the exercises too simple and do not progress as fast as they could. Lessons are well organised and resources always available for pupils to access easily and independently. Teaching assistants are deployed especially well to ensure pupils who need extra help make great strides in their learning. Teachers mark work with encouraging comments. They discuss with each pupil what they could do even better. The easy access to computers in each classroom means ICT is a standard part of each lesson, helping pupils to make the most of modern technology across the curriculum.

Outstanding care, guidance and support have resulted in good and outstanding outcomes in pupils' personal development because pupils not surprisingly feel safe, secure and very well looked after. The school liaises very closely with specialists and outside agencies to find the right support for pupils whose circumstances make them more vulnerable and those with particular special educational needs and/or disabilities. The breakfast and after-school clubs provide calm, safe and supportive places where pupils can play productive games or finish homework and rest after a busy day.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account:	
The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Pupils, parents, carers and staff hold the headteacher in high esteem. Many parents and carers justifiably believe the school is going from strength to strength under a headteacher who is energetic, determined and dedicated. Since her arrival, she has methodically identified what the school does well and what needs to be improved. She regularly monitors the quality of teaching herself and is now including a wider range of senior leaders to assist in this quality assurance. Senior leaders collaborate particularly well to enliven the curriculum with innovative ideas best matched to the pupils' needs. The school development plan is a useful, working document, carefully identifying the steps to further improvement and pinpointing precisely which member of staff should be accountable for the success of each priority. The school maintains a good bank of data to track how each pupil or group of pupils is progressing. It is in the process of transferring assessment information to a new computer system to ensure even more effective analysis. The governing body is knowledgeable about the context of the school and takes well-considered decisions to move the school

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forward. It ensures procedures to safeguard pupils are robust and effective, with regular checks on the effectiveness of recruitment and child protection systems.

Parents receive very good quality information on school events, their children's progress and how to help learning from home. They are valuable members of the school community and reciprocate by being active fund raisers and providing a great deal of voluntary help. However, a few parents and carers too readily keep their children off school causing disruption to smooth learning when pupils return and need the teacher's extra attention to catch up. Partnerships with business, the local authority and diocese promote learning and well-being very effectively. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve exceptionally well because of extremely successful links with professional experts. Strong connections with the junior school ensure pupils' smooth transition into Year 3. Community cohesion is at the heart of the school. Pupils are really proud of their different heritages and gladly share their customs and ways of life with others. With a very sound Christian understanding, pupils show tremendous enjoyment finding out about a wide range of religious festivals and visiting different places of worship. The school is well informed on the different backgrounds of pupils, ensuring they all have the same opportunities to achieve equally well.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children love their time in the Nursery and Reception classes. One parent commented, 'My child is very happy to go to Nursery – even at the weekend if he could.' The care and attention paid to each individual child is excellent and means parents can leave their offspring with confidence. Staff have become expert at settling in new children as they arrive at the beginning of Nursery and Reception. Children very soon become independent and self-possessed. They behave well, get

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on positively with each other and come on in leaps and bounds in their personal development. They move on to Year 1 as sensible and polite pupils.

Children make good progress in all areas of learning and leave at the end of Reception with skill levels above what would be expected. Children achieve particularly well in physical and creative development because they are given plenty of opportunities to explore, climb and use their initiative. Inside and outside areas are set up with an exciting range of activities for painting, junk-modelling and building. A generous complement of staff interacts well with the children, encouraging plenty of conversation and instilling a love of books and reading. The newly established key worker system means each member of staff can concentrate on ensuring children in their small group are achieving as they should. Key workers plan activities to match individual need, whether for children with learning difficulties or those who are able and talented. Systems to assess progress are effective but on occasion notes on what each child can do are not filed quickly enough to ensure all the most up-to-date information on each child is in one place for quick identification of any dips in achievement. The early years leader, based in the Nursery, is clear about the strengths and areas for development and is working well with her reception colleagues to maintain a cohesive and strong foundation stage.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The vast majority of parents and carers are happy with all that the school does for their children. They nearly all agree that their children enjoy school and are kept safe. All believe the school is led and managed effectively. The inspection team concurs with all these positive sentiments. A few parents and carers have concerns that the school does not help them to support their children's learning or keep them informed about progress. The inspection team judges that the school communicates well with parents involving them positively in their children's learning.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Mary's Church of England Infant 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 103 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 230 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	75	73	27	26	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	67	65	35	34	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	42	41	52	50	5	5	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	53	51	46	45	2	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	56	54	44	43	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	52	50	43	42	5	5	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	50	49	47	46	2	2	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	48	47	40	39	2	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	48	47	47	46	4	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	46	45	49	48	2	2	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	39	38	55	53	1	1	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	62	60	36	35	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	69	67	33	32	1	1	0	0

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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 08 April 2011 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 school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



4 November 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Mary's Church of England Infant School, London N8 7BU

Thank you very much for welcoming us to your school. Yours is an outstanding school. You make good progress. Teaching is good because teachers plan very interesting activities and lessons are fast paced. We think the school provides you with a very exciting range of trips, visitors and clubs. We are particularly impressed with your art and your historical work about Guy Fawkes.

Your behaviour is good and you get on very well with each other. You know how to look after each other and are especially good at keeping yourselves safe. We like the way you keep yourselves healthy by eating plenty of fruit, enjoying sport and walking to school. We think you are all very community minded and are valuable members not only of St Mary's but also of Hornsey.

To make your learning even better, we have asked your teachers to set the most able of you tasks that really challenge you. Also we have asked them to make notes when marking your books to show that you understand how to improve your work further.

We certainly enjoyed our visit to your school. We know that your teachers and their assistants make your school a special place for you. All of you can help by always striving to do your best and making your families and the school proud of you.

Yours sincerely

Sarah McDermott
Lead inspector

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