

St Mary's CofE (VC) J and I School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107538
Local authority	Calderdale
Inspection number	377595
Inspection dates	16–17 May 2012
Lead inspector	Steven Hill

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

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	84
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jim Skelsey
Headteacher	Nicola Jenkinson
Date of previous school inspection	14 November 2007
School address	Mill Bank Sowerby Bridge HX6 3EJ
Telephone number	01422 823353
Fax number	01422 823353
Email address	admin@st-marys.calderdale.sch.uk



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Introduction

Inspection team

Steven Hill

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Nine lessons were observed taught by three teachers. Meetings were held with staff, groups of pupils, members of the governing body, a local authority officer and an external consultant. The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, particularly that related to the monitoring of performance, pupils' progress and safeguarding. Questionnaires were analysed from pupils, staff and from 60 parents and carers. The inspector examined samples of pupils' work, observed assembly and break-times and heard some younger pupils read.

Information about the school

This is a small primary school in a rural village location. The large majority of pupils are White British with a few from a range of minority-ethnic heritages. No current pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be entitled to free school meals is below average. The proportion who have statements of special educational needs or who are supported at school action plus is below average, although the proportion of pupils supported at school action is high. There have been considerable changes and disruption to staffing since the previous inspection. A new headteacher started two years ago and a new deputy headteacher took up post last term.

In 2011, the school did not meet floor targets which are minimum standards set by the government for pupils' attainment and progress.

The school provides accommodation for a privately run before-and after-school club. This provision is inspected and reported upon separately.

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 not outstanding because achievement is not outstanding; teaching, whilst good, is not good enough to raise progress to this high level. Good provision is made for pupils’ spiritual, moral and social development, but their opportunities to meet and learn about people beyond the immediate locality are limited.
- Achievement is good in English and mathematics. Attainment is above average in most years because pupils make good progress. Last year, the tiny group of pupils in Year 6 did not meet floor targets because of a variety of complex reasons, including their low starting points. Current progress is good throughout the school.
- Teaching is good and is improving. An innovative system, known as assertive mentoring, which involves meetings between teachers and individual pupils to discuss their progress and set targets, has raised aspirations. The impact of this new system has not been fully evaluated but initial indications suggest achievement is rising. Most lessons have a good pace and teachers make good use of improved assessment systems to match work accurately to individuals’ needs. Occasionally, for parts of lessons, the pace slows or the work is not challenging enough for some pupils.
- Pupils’ behaviour is good and they feel safe and happy in school. They form good relationships and work well together. They have positive attitudes to learning and are keen to succeed. They have great confidence that the adults will help them if they have problems, either with work or socially. Attendance is above average.
- The leadership of teaching and management of performance are good, particularly in maintaining good teaching quality, despite disruption to staffing. Clear leadership, improved monitoring and better assessment have contributed to a strong shared drive for improvement. A lively, wide-ranging curriculum supports pupils’ interest and enjoyment, and hence their progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, and hence raise achievement by:
 - consolidating and embedding the work done on assertive mentoring by evaluating its impact and modifying it accordingly
 - ensuring that all lessons maintain a good pace and provide a good level of challenge for higher-attaining pupils throughout
 - providing pupils with more opportunities to respond to teachers' comments and suggestions in the marking of their work.

- Give pupils more opportunities to learn about and meet with people from communities beyond the immediate locality.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Attainment is above average in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Years 2 and 6. This represents good achievement in the light of children's starting points in the Early Years Foundation Stage which are broadly as expected for their ages. Their achievement in reading is supported well by their good understanding of phonics (how the sounds in words relate to the written letters). Progress in mathematics, which had lagged behind that in English, has improved over the last year following the school's focus on this. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make the same good progress as their classmates because they are given tasks that are carefully designed to be challenging but manageable. Boys and girls make similarly good progress, regardless of their background. The large majority of parents and carers are rightly positive about their children's progress. Despite occasionally not being challenged in parts of some lessons, the more-able pupils make good progress.

A rare exception to above-average attainment was for the tiny cohort of pupils who finished Year 6 in 2011 and did not meet the government's floor standards. This group had low starting points, a high proportion of pupils with special education needs and a high percentage who started at this school near the end of Key Stage 2. Disruption to teaching and illness also affected progress. Despite this, their progress from Year 2 was broadly average.

The school's tracking shows that all groups of pupils currently in school have achieved well over the last two years and their progress in class continues to be good. Pupils in Years 2 and 3 made good progress in their understanding of fractions when they used practical materials, or a computer program, to investigate equivalent fractions, concentrating well and sharing materials sensibly. Pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 increased their understanding of evaporation when they discussed their ideas together and clarified their explanations as they responded thoughtfully to the teacher's searching questions. Reception children, who share a classroom with Year 1, make good progress in all areas of learning, but particularly in linking sounds and letters, reading and writing. They learn successfully, both when choosing their own

activities and when directly taught by the adults. For example, they listened attentively as the teacher explained the basics of weaving before using a variety of materials to experiment themselves, showing patience and perseverance in the face of problems.

Quality of teaching

Teaching has many strengths common to all lessons. Good relationships with pupils and well-established routines ensure that lessons are orderly and productive. Pupils respond well to teachers' high expectations of work and behaviour. Reading is taught well from the start in the Early Years Foundation Stage with an effective concentration on teaching letters and their sounds, complemented by pupils' good sight vocabulary and enjoyment of books. Teachers explain things clearly, often using interactive whiteboards to clarify new learning and enthuse pupils. This was seen in a successful literacy lesson with Years 2 and 3 when they improved their use of direct speech after the teacher showed them just what was required. Lively presentations and the use of humour frequently engage pupils' interest and hold their concentration. Teachers are generally very effective in providing different activities that are well-matched to the wide range of abilities in each class. Pupils are given clear, specific targets for their learning. Individual discussions with their teachers, in assertive mentoring sessions, ensure they know these well. Teachers often use these targets effectively to drive progress, as was observed in a successful English lesson in the class for the oldest pupils, where they applied their personal targets to editing and refining their writing. The provision of individually targeted tasks is a strong factor in supporting the good progress of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. A good balance of support and challenge from skilled teaching assistants enhances this. Occasionally, however, when all pupils work together as a class, there is insufficient challenge for the more able and the pace of learning slows. In most lessons, these pupils are challenged well and make good progress overall. Teachers successfully promote pupils' collaborative skills particularly through the regular use of paired discussions.

Pupils' work is marked thoroughly. Teachers explain what has been successful and suggest how work might be improved. However, these suggestions are not always followed up in successive pieces of work and pupils are not always given the opportunities to act on their teacher's advice. Parents and carers are positive about the teaching in the school. Several commented on how well the assertive mentoring programme had improved their own and their children's understanding of progress.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Behaviour is good and pupils feel very safe and secure in the school. They are keen to learn and work hard. Parents and carers are very positive about their children's safety and how bullying is dealt with. A small minority had some concerns about lessons being disrupted by misbehaviour. Pupils confirmed that this did happen sometimes but said that such instances are rare and are dealt with quickly by staff, so that their learning is barely affected. Pupils are realistic but positive about behaviour, agreeing that there are lapses, but saying behaviour has much improved since the previous academic year. Pupils who find it difficult to conform are

successfully helped to improve their behaviour. One group agreed, 'Behaviour is not gold... but at least silver medal!'

Pupils understand about the variety of types of bullying and are consistent in saying it is rare in school. They say they have confidence that both the adults and their friends would help them if there were problems. Pupils get on well together and like and respect their teachers. They enjoy learning and take a pride in their success. Their enjoyment of learning has been reflected in steadily increasing attendance over the last few years. Attendance this year is well above average. There are many strengths in pupils' personal development. In a lesson for pupils in Years 2 and 3, they made great strides in their understanding of moral issues as they considered a realistic dilemma faced by a character in a story. The teacher's incisive questions and clear explanations ensured their good progress as they thoughtfully offered their views.

Leadership and management

After considerable disruption to teaching over the last few years the school now has a stable staff who share clear common goals and work together as an effective team to improve pupils' progress. The headteacher sets clear direction and has introduced more extensive monitoring of teaching and better tracking of pupils' progress. The information from these is used effectively to identify any issues and address them, both for individual pupils and at whole-school level. All teachers are fully involved in this process and use their individual expertise to support each other well. The information from monitoring leads to professional development which is closely linked to individual teacher and whole school needs. The school makes good use of outside expertise to consolidate improvements and to support performance management. A more sophisticated use of teaching assistants to provide help and challenge where it is most effective is helping to consolidate good achievement.

Governors have good systems to learn about the school's performance and are well-able to hold it to account. They have worked with staff to ensure that safeguarding procedures in the school meet requirements. Governors and staff promote equality in the school by ensuring that the performance of groups and individuals is tracked carefully. Although there are occasions in lessons when the more able do not make enough progress, by the time they leave there is no inequality in progress. The school works well to eliminate any discrimination, so that all pupils are fully involved in school life, whatever their background. The use of assertive mentoring has improved pupils' understanding of their learning, enhanced links with parents and made teaching more effective in addressing the needs of individuals. The school's success in promoting good teaching and progress, and the accurate evaluation of its own strengths and weaknesses, show it is well placed to continue to improve.

The school's curriculum is broad and balanced with a good range of enrichment activities that support pupils' learning and enjoyment. The music curriculum is strong, making good use of outside expertise to enhance pupils' standards. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is consistently promoted in lessons, assemblies and in everyday interactions. There are good opportunities to help pupils' cultural development but, as the school has identified, they have too few

opportunities to meet people from beyond the immediate area, or to learn about different cultures in this country and abroad.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	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 to 31 December 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.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
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.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures
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.



18 May 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Mary's CofE (VC) J and I School, Sowerby Bridge, HX6 3EJ

Thank you for your warm welcome when I inspected your school. I enjoyed talking to you and seeing you hard at work in lessons. I was pleased to see that your behaviour is good and that you all get along well together. You told me that you enjoy school; your good attendance shows this is true.

You go to a good school. You are making good progress because your teachers are skilful at helping you to learn. You reach standards that are better than those in most schools. Your teachers work hard to make sure that everyone gets work that is just right for them, so that you learn quickly. Occasionally, work is a bit too easy for some pupils and I have agreed with staff that they are going to make sure this does not happen in future. You all know your targets well and the assertive mentoring is starting to help you learn faster. I have asked the teachers to carry on with this and to check on how much difference it makes. Teachers mark your work well and often tell you how to make it better. I have asked them to give you more time in future to read their suggestions and to act on their advice.

You have lots of interesting things to do and enjoy practical work and using computers. You are good singers and I was surprised by how many of you are in the choir. However, you do not get much chance to meet with people from beyond your part of Yorkshire or have enough opportunities to learn about different people in the world. Some of you, in Year 6, told me you would like to do this more and your headteacher had already decided that this should happen. I have agreed with her that it should be a priority for the next year or so.

The adults are keen to make the school even better and you can help by keeping up your hard work and good behaviour and by always acting on what teachers say in their marking. I hope you carry on enjoying life at St Mary's.

Yours sincerely

Steven Hill
Lead Inspector

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