



# St Mary Magdalene Junior and Infant School

Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 103989  
**LEA** Sandwell  
**Inspection number** 277043  
**Inspection dates** 1 November 2005 to 2 November 2005  
**Reporting inspector** Paul Edwards RISP

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Stanway Road
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled		West Bromwich
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11		West Midlands B71 1RP
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	0121 588 2371
<b>Number on roll</b>	175	<b>Fax number</b>	0121 588 8454
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr R Franks
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	25 September 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Joanne Armstrong

<b>Age group</b> 3 to 11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 1 November 2005 - 2 November 2005	<b>Inspection number</b> 277043
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

St Mary Magdalene School serves a challenging area and is participating in a government initiative aimed at improving pupil attendance. Children start school with limited skills and experiences. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is broadly average. The number of pupils who start and leave the school at times other than the usual times is high. Just over 40% of the pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds. Around one third of these pupils do not speak English as their first language but only a small number are at an early stage of learning English. A nursery class was opened in September 2003. The school has been awarded Investor in People Champion status, and has gained a Healthy Schools and Artsmark awards.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

St Mary Magdalene School provides a satisfactory education, with some good aspects. This matches the school's view of itself, showing that senior staff have a clear understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. Pupils thoroughly enjoy all aspects of school and are keen to learn. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Children in the nursery and reception classes get a good start to their learning and make good progress. Despite this, many still have limited skills in language and literacy at the start of Year 1. In Years 1 to 6, pupils are achieving reasonably well but they do better in mathematics and science than they do in English. The main reason for this is that there are some weaknesses in the teaching in this subject. Senior staff know this and are trying to make some improvements but there is still some way to go before pupils do as well as they should. Pupils with learning difficulties receive good support and make progress in line with their classmates. Attendance is below average because of the number of families that take holidays during term time. There is good care, guidance and welfare for pupils and an effective emphasis on their health and well-being. Teachers mark the pupils' work well, giving them a clear indication of how they might improve. However, they do not demand sufficiently high standards of presentation. The headteacher and senior staff provide strong and effective leadership. The school is well placed to improve further and provides satisfactory value for money.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the rate of progress and the quality of teaching in English throughout the school.
- Improve pupils' presentation of work.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

The good start made by the children in the nursery is built upon effectively in the reception class, and means that most children reach average standards by the time they enter Year 1. However, as a result of their very low starting point, there are still a good number who do not reach expected levels, particularly in language and literacy. Further up the school, standards are beginning to improve, partly because pupils are so keen to learn. These improvements are more apparent in science and mathematics than in English. The school is achieving these improvements through careful checking on how well pupils are doing and the setting of targets to make sure that they continue to build on what they have already learned. The success of this work shows in the high levels of achievement by the Year 6 pupils in the 2005 national tests. All of the Year 6 pupils achieved at least the average level in science. There was also a significant increase in the number reaching this level in mathematics. Although standards in English have improved, there is still some work to do to ensure that pupils do as well as they should in this subject. The main reason for this is that skills in writing are weak.

There are weaknesses in the teaching of writing and not enough opportunities for pupils to practise their skills in subjects across the curriculum. The school has been successful in addressing the underachievement of pupils with learning difficulties and most of these pupils make sound gains in their learning. There is no significant difference in the achievement of boys and girls. The pupils from minority ethnic groups represent the full range of abilities. These pupils make similar progress to their classmates. The small number of pupils who are at an early stage of learning English are provided with good support, enabling them to make good progress.

Grade: 3

## **Personal development and well-being**

**Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development is good with some outstanding features. This is reflected in the pride they show in the school, their good behaviour and their eagerness to be involved in all aspects of school life. Although attendance is below the national average, it has improved in recent years. The school does all it can to encourage pupils to attend regularly and to dissuade parents from taking holidays during term time. Pupils pay due regard to safety and say that there is very little bullying, and when rare instances occur they are dealt with quickly. Relationships throughout the school are warm and supportive. A pupil described the school as 'a happy place to be', and a parent said her child complained at weekends about not being able to go to school! Pupils show a high level of interest in their work and are keen to improve. They are polite, friendly and helpful to visitors. They are keen to take responsibility and many take on roles as house captains, prefects and school councillors. Of particular note are the pupils who act as 'ambassadors', showing visitors around and visiting other schools to generate ideas to improve their school. Several Year 6 pupils act as 'buddies' to reception children, helping them to settle into school. Pupils value the school council, and feel their views are listened to and respected.

The pupils have a very good awareness of the importance of a healthy lifestyle and appreciate the breakfast club and availability of free fruit. Pupil's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They have a strong sense of responsibility for others, as shown in their keen commitment to raising significant amounts of money to support the rebuilding of a school in Sri Lanka. The pupils are developing a range of skills in subjects such as mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT), which will help them in their future careers.

Grade: 2

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

**Grade: 3**

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Much of the teaching observed during the inspection was good. In the nursery and reception classes, the vibrant and well-planned

teaching enables the pupils to make good progress. In Years 5 and 6, high expectations and work that is well matched to the pupils' different levels of ability ensure good progress. However, staff changes and a lack of experience in other year groups have resulted in some weaknesses in teaching and this has affected pupils' progress. There are too few opportunities for the pupils to write in different styles and to practise writing at length in other subjects. The school is aware that this is happening and has put in a wide range of strategies to improve the quality of teaching and learning, particularly in English.

The school has very good systems to identify how well the pupils are doing and generally the teachers use the information well when planning lessons. However, occasionally they give more able pupils work that is too easy or require them to complete work undertaken by their classmates before moving on to more challenging activities. The teachers do not provide the pupils with sufficient opportunities to write at length in subjects such as science, history and geography.

Grade: 3

## **Curriculum and other activities**

**Grade: 3**

The curriculum is satisfactory. It generally provides well for children in the school, and builds effectively on their learning. However, there are too few opportunities for pupils to improve writing skills in other subjects and occasionally more able pupils need greater challenge. The nursery and reception classes give children a secure and stimulating start to their education, with staff recognising the importance of developing children's self-confidence and social skills. Good emphasis is placed on developing the children's weak language and literacy skills. The curriculum is well organised and generally adapted to address the varying needs of pupils. Support for pupils with learning difficulties is good. The curriculum is enriched by the good variety of extra-curricular activities the school provides. Visits and visitors extend pupils' enjoyment of learning and this has a positive impact on their achievement and behaviour. The school has worked hard to improve provision in ICT and it is now used effectively to support learning in other areas of the curriculum.

Grade: 3

## **Care, guidance and support**

**Grade: 2**

The school cares well for pupils. Children in the nursery settle quickly as a result of the sensitive induction procedures and caring staff. A concerted effort is made to ensure all pupils develop their self-esteem and feel valued. Because teachers and support staff know pupils well, they are able to identify any concerns quickly and provide support where needed. The school has developed a good level of expertise that enables them to provide effective support for those pupils who are learning English as an additional language. The school works well with parents, carers and other agencies and this enhances pupils' academic progress and personal development. Parents are

overwhelmingly supportive of the care the school provides and value the opportunities to be involved in their child's education.

The pupils value the regular 'Anti-Bullying' weeks the school holds and the friendly sense of competition which the house system stimulates. Pupils' work is assessed regularly and there is an increasing use of the information to help pupils see how well they are doing and what they need to do next to improve. Teachers do not demand sufficiently high standards of presentation, however, and this results in pupils producing work that is too often untidy.

Grade: 2

## **Leadership and management**

**Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good. With the effective support of the staff and governing body, the headteacher has been very successful in addressing weaknesses identified in the previous report, particularly the unsatisfactory teaching in the reception year and low standards in mathematics and science at the end of Year 6. Standards in English have also improved but there is still work to be done in this area. The establishment of a nursery class is helping to address the concerns regarding children's weak language and personal development skills. However, the nursery has only been in place for two years and it will take a while before the impact of the good work done here filters through the school. There are good systems in place to ensure that the school continues to improve, with effective processes used to measure parental satisfaction. Senior staff are working particularly hard to make sure that teaching improves. Where teaching has been inadequate, the school has introduced effective measures to address the issue. The analysis of pupils' work and the tracking of their progress over time have helped to identify where additional support and resources are needed. There has been a good impact on pupils' progress in science and mathematics. This has also helped to improve the progress made by those pupils with learning difficulties. The school monitors carefully the progress made by pupils from minority ethnic groups and, where appropriate, provides additional support. The school is very aware of how well it is doing and plans effectively for its future development. Clear identification of the way forward has resulted in significantly improved standards in mathematics and science. Regular checks on the teaching of English and the effect on pupils' progress are helping to raise standards in this subject but there is still some way to go before pupils are doing as well as they should.

Grade: 2

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## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2	NA

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

St Mary Magdalene Junior and Infant School Stanway Road West Bromwich West Midlands  
B71 1RP

3 November 2005

Dear Pupils,

Thank you all for your warm welcome when we visited your school and for talking to us and telling us all we needed to know.

St Mary Magdalene is providing you with a satisfactory education. Some of the best things about the school are:

The very hard work you put into your work and your obvious enjoyment of school.

The progress you make in mathematics and science.

Your good behaviour and the way you help one another.

The way you are thinking about healthy food and trying to do lots of exercise.

The wide range of very interesting activities that you all undertake.

To make it even better, we have asked the school to:

Help you to make better progress in your English.

Encourage you to present your work more neatly.

We hope you continue to enjoy your time at school, work hard and do well in the future.

Paul Edwards Lead inspector