



St Mary's CofE Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 106247
LEA Thameside
Inspection number 277517
Inspection dates 12 July 2006 to 13 July 2006
Reporting inspector Mr Stephen Wall CfBT Lead Inspector

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Church Street
School category	Voluntary aided		Droylsden
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		Manchester M43 7BR
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0161 3703948
Number on roll	261	Fax number	0161 3715886
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs S Marsh
Date of previous inspection	9 October 2000	Headteacher	Mr I Spencer

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

St Mary's C of E Primary school is of average size and serves an urban area on the outskirts of Manchester. Almost all the pupils are from White British backgrounds. Of the few from minority ethnic heritages, none is at an early stage of learning English. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is just below average. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average and the proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average. The school holds several awards including Investors In People, Basic Skills Agency Quality Mark and Artsmark and the Eco-schools award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The school judges its overall effectiveness accurately; this a good school with some outstanding features. It offers very good value for money. Provision in the Foundation Stage is good. Children make a confident start to school and are prepared well for entry into Year 1. In Key Stages 1 and 2 pupils make good progress in response to good teaching. In mathematics, where teaching is particularly effective, pupils make excellent progress. The unusually high numbers of very able teaching assistants make an outstanding contribution to supporting pupils in their learning. Pupils meet challenging targets and, in mathematics, they regularly exceed them. Pupils' personal development is of the highest order and underpinned by the school's strong Christian values. The outstanding curriculum meets the needs of all pupils and offers an excellent range of enrichment activities. Care, guidance and support are good; all procedures to ensure the pupils' safety and welfare are firmly in place. However, the school could do more to support pupils' academic progress by making clearer to them how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve their work further. Leadership and management are good. The headteacher is ably supported by the deputy headteacher in running the school successfully. Governors are knowledgeable and take their responsibilities very seriously. Managers know the school very well but planning for the future does not identify with sufficient clarity and purpose their priorities for raising standards and achievement even further. Since the previous inspection the school has made good progress and has good capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make the quality of marking consistently good and involve the pupils more closely in assessing their own work so that they know what they need to do to improve.
- Improve the quality of development planning so that a much sharper focus is given to priorities most likely to raise standards and achievement even further.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children enter the nursery with standards just below those normally expected. Good teaching and a curriculum which is well matched to their needs enables them to make good progress to reach the expected standards by the time they enter Year 1. Pupils continue to make good progress as they move through the school. Standards at the end of Years 1 and 2 have been consistently above average for a number of years. Results for Year 2 pupils in 2005 were above average in reading and mathematics and average in writing. The 2005 results for Year 6 pupils showed a similar profile. However, in mathematics results were well above average reflecting not only the very good teaching but the pupils' general enthusiasm for the subject. 'I love maths. It really makes you think and its fun!' was one pupil's eager response. In English standards were above average with reading again stronger than writing. In science results were average. The school is tackling improvement of writing skills and science with a range

of initiatives, including the deployment of a talented literacy consultant. The impact of these strategies is evident in the much improved 2006 test results in English and science. All groups of pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make similar good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very strong and is underpinned by the school's strong Christian values and doctrines. Pupils behave well and relationships are respectful and harmonious. Almost all have very positive attitudes to learning. Pupils willingly take on positions of responsibility; for example, older pupils act as 'buddies' to younger ones. Attendance and punctuality are good and getting even better because of the school's effective procedures for improving these aspects. Pupils enjoy being at school and feel safe and happy there. 'I love coming to school' was a typical assertion from one pupil. Measures are taken to ensure that the school site is secure. Pupils know the importance of eating and drinking healthily and how to handle risks that threaten their health or safety. Pupils learn the importance of teamwork by participating enthusiastically in physical education lessons and the very wide range of other sporting activities, including those taking place after school. Through group and partner work in lessons they also develop a good sense of helping and supporting each other. These, and the good standards attained in the basic skills, prepare them well for the future. The school council gives pupils an effective voice in decision-making and they feel their views are taken seriously. They are active fundraisers for charitable causes and this gives them a high level of social responsibility.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good, with some examples of outstanding practice. Teachers plan and prepare their lessons well to ensure that they are interesting and that the needs of all learners are appropriately met. They have high expectations of the pupils and have good relationships with them. As a result, the pupils work diligently and respond well in lessons, reaching above average standards in all areas. Very high attainment in mathematics results from particularly effective and challenging teaching in that subject. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used well to bring added interest and enjoyment to lessons. Teachers work in close partnership with a large team of highly skilled and effective teaching assistants who make an important contribution to all aspects of the school's work. In particular, they promote pupils' positive motivation and good attainment. Regular assessments of pupils' progress are made and the data gained is used to identify where extra support is needed to help pupils achieve their potential. Marking is carried out conscientiously but its quality is inconsistent and pupils are rarely involved in assessing their own work; as a result,

they do not always understand what they should do to improve. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well organised and effective; this ensures they make good progress equal to that of other pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The school modestly judges its curriculum as good; it is outstanding. It provides an excellent range of high quality activities to meet the interests of all its pupils. This helps pupils enjoy school and achieve well. The curriculum is carefully planned with an effective focus on developing pupils' skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT. Work in the classroom is complemented by outstanding opportunities to participate in musical activities and sport. Pupils are very positive about the lunchtime and after-school clubs which are very well attended. The school makes good use of local facilities and organisations, such as the Manchester Camerata, to enrich pupils' learning. There is very effective provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and for those who have additional gifts and talents in literacy and music. For example, the deployment of a very talented teaching assistant as a literacy consultant to work on extended writing skills with higher attaining pupils is both innovative and popular. Pupils are well prepared for the transition to secondary school by activities such as enrichment days and French lessons.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school cares well for its pupils. Procedures are firmly in place to ensure child protection and to safeguard the pupils from potential hazards in school and on outside visits. The school follows the local authority procedures for checking on the suitability of adults working in the school. The school provides good levels of adult support in each class. Pupils are confident in approaching adults in the school if they have any problems. On a very restricted site, an attractive and stimulating learning environment has been established. Good attention has been given to the outdoor space, which provides for quiet recreation as well as for more active play. All of this contributes positively to the pupils' personal development and their enjoyment of school.

Support and guidance for pupils' academic progress as they move through the school is satisfactory. Being largely paper-based, procedures for recording and using data for tracking progress and achievement are time consuming and unwieldy; the school has rightly introduced improved, computerised systems to make more effective and efficient use of data to track and monitor pupils' progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good and focus successfully on maintaining high standards and the welfare of the pupils. The governing body is particularly effective; it knows the school very well, takes its responsibilities very seriously and offers good

levels of support and challenge. The headteacher and governors manage the finances very astutely; the recent acquisition of good ICT facilities is typical of the school's targeted use of its finances to support teaching and learning. The headteacher, most ably supported by the deputy headteacher, has high expectations of staff and pupils. Senior managers are good role models. Good staff morale and teamwork are evident. Standards have been maintained at above average levels for several years and are improving. Management is strong and the school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis. The appointment, training and deployment of a large team of teaching assistants have been exceptionally well managed. This maximises the impact they have on supporting teaching and learning. The quality of teaching and learning is monitored regularly and effectively by senior managers. Subject managers are knowledgeable and the school is starting to involve them more effectively in evaluating the quality of provision in their areas. The school analyses data rigorously to help in the evaluation of its own effectiveness. The school improvement plan is satisfactory. However, it does not focus with sufficient clarity on the priorities for action which will have the maximum impact on raising standards and achievement even further.

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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>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	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

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ 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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
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
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
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
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
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
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
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

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to inspect your school. We enjoyed meeting you and talking to you about St Mary's.

We think you go to a good school and some aspects are really excellent. You make good progress in your learning because your teachers and their assistants work very hard to make lessons interesting. We were particularly impressed with how well you do in mathematics and how much you enjoy it. The school takes good care of you and is doing an excellent job in helping you to grow into responsible and caring youngsters. You are lucky to have such a super range of interesting activities to do outside lessons and we are pleased that so many of you join in. Your school is well led and managed. Your headteacher and all the staff are always looking for ways to make St Mary's an even better place to be.

In order to make the school even more successful, we are asking your headteacher to make sure two things happen.

- We want all your teachers to mark your work to the same high standard and we want you to have a better grasp of what you need to do to improve your work.
- We want your headteacher to be very clear about what the school needs to do to make sure you make even better progress in your learning.

You have a very important part to play in making sure that St Mary's continues to be such a good school. We are confident you will do all you can to support each other and your teachers in its future success.