



# St Mary's Church of England Primary School

Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 109995  
**LEA** Slough LEA  
**Inspection number** 278333  
**Inspection dates** 23 May 2006 to 24 May 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Steven Hill AI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Yew Tree Road
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled		Slough
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11		SL1 2AR
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01753 534791
<b>Number on roll</b>	452	<b>Fax number</b>	01753 512452
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mrs Lorna Longman
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	6 November 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs G Morrison

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

This is a large primary school with a nursery. It has doubled in size since the last inspection. Pupils come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds, with Pakistani, Indian, White British and Black African being the largest groups. Over 60% of pupils have a mother tongue other than English and about a third of these are at the early stages of learning English. Children's standards when they start in the nursery are well below average. A significant proportion of pupils come from families whose social circumstances are disadvantaged. There are very high levels of mobility, with many pupils joining the school in different age groups. A significant proportion of these pupils are at early stages of learning English.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good school where pupils achieve well because of good teaching and an exciting and varied curriculum. It is a harmonious, multicultural community where pupils' personal development is outstanding. Good leadership and management from a strong staff team underpin the school's many strengths. The school's own evaluation of its effectiveness was accurate. It provides good value for money, having made good progress since the last inspection. It is well placed to improve further.

Provision in the foundation stage is good. Although standards are still below average by the time children go into Year 1, they have made good progress in relation to their starting points.

Teaching is good, although it varies between satisfactory and outstanding. As a result, pupils make good progress throughout the school and do particularly well in English. High quality teaching to develop speaking and listening skills supports pupils' thinking, their self-confidence and their outstanding progress in writing. Positive relationships and high expectations characterise most lessons. Pupils behave very well, work hard and enjoy learning. Teaching assistants make a major contribution to pupils' progress.

In a few lessons, pupils only make satisfactory progress when the pace is too slow, opportunities are missed for them to contribute their views, or the work is not challenging enough, particularly for more able pupils.

The care and guidance provided for pupils are outstanding because of a concentration on the academic and pastoral achievements of each individual. The large numbers of pupils just starting to learn English are given excellent support, based on their particular needs, and make rapid progress. Attendance is slightly below average, mainly because of pupils who take extended holidays in their family's country of origin. This often has a negative impact on their achievement.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the consistency of teaching, particularly by ensuring there are always high levels of challenge and a good pace in lessons, and that pupils have consistent opportunities to contribute their views.
- Improve attendance, particularly for those pupils who take extended holidays abroad.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

All pupils achieve well throughout the school, and most meet challenging targets. Pupils who are at St Mary's throughout their primary years achieve standards above the national average. Their achievement in English is outstanding. A few pupils do not make the progress expected when they miss a lot of school because of holidays abroad.

Children start in nursery with very low standards. They make good progress but, by the end of reception, standards are still below average. Standards are just below average by Year 2. Most pupils meet the expected levels, but few exceed them except in reading. By Year 6, standards are average in mathematics and science, and significantly above average in English, particularly writing.

Bilingual pupils make rapid progress in learning English because of the extensive, good quality support they are given. Pupils with learning difficulties achieve well, particularly in developing literacy skills in the younger classes.

The standards observed do not fully reflect the good progress made, because of the large numbers of pupils who join each cohort at other than the usual times. Many of these are new to English schools, and some speak little English. Although they are given excellent support and make good progress, many take some time to catch up with their classmates.

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

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. In a Key Stage 1 assembly, for example, pupils reflected very thoughtfully about the care that God shows and how this should affect how they treat others. Pupils have a very good awareness of other faiths and beliefs. Excellent relationships mean that pupils from a wide variety of backgrounds work extremely well together. Pupils have a strong moral sense and are generous in their support for charities. They learn to be reflective and respectful, and are aware of their own emotions and those of others.

Although a small number of pupils who display very challenging behaviour have been excluded for short periods, the vast majority behave very well in lessons and around the school. Pupils who are new to the school feel particularly welcome and are able to settle quickly. Although attendance is still below average, it has improved significantly. Pupils enjoy school and feel safe in a very caring environment. One boy in Year 2 said 'I like everything about this school'. Pupils say that bullying is rare and, if it occurs, it is dealt with effectively. They understand the need to lead safe and healthy lifestyles. They are involved in a large number of community projects and festivals. They are keen to take responsibilities, such as acting as 'buddies' for younger pupils. Pupils' ideas are valued and the school has acted on their suggestions to, for example, improve the toilets and provide new playground equipment. Their good progress in writing, and their outstanding teamwork and independence, augur well for their future economic development.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching is good. High expectations of work and behaviour, and very positive relationships lead to good learning. Pupils like and respect their teachers so they

behave well and work hard to please them. They take a pride in their achievements. Teachers provide interesting tasks, which generate interest and enthusiasm. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are developed very well and used very effectively in other subjects. Pupils are helped to develop high levels of independence and outstanding collaborative skills. The skilled teaching assistants contribute considerably to helping pupils to learn, particularly those who struggle with their work, or who are just learning to speak English.

The quality of individual lessons varies from satisfactory to outstanding. The best lessons have high levels of challenge and a brisk pace. There is a careful match of work to pupils' individual needs, based on a thorough assessment of their achievement. This is particularly strong in English. Marking of pupils' work is good, giving them clear feedback and showing them how to improve.

In lessons that are just satisfactory, pupils' progress is slower, often because the pace is too slow or because the tasks lack challenge, particularly for the more able. On occasions, pupils spend too long listening to the teacher and opportunities are missed for them to contribute their views.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 1**

The outstanding curriculum contributes significantly to pupils' good basic skills, excellent personal development and evident enjoyment of learning. Children settle quickly in the Nursery because of high quality care and a stimulating learning environment. In all classes, the curriculum ensures that pupils acquire good basic skills, within a wide framework of exciting activities, including drama and extensive practical work. Pupils use information and communication technology (ICT) increasingly to support their work in a range of subjects. For example, pupils in Year 4 researched skeletons on the Internet and produced a multi-media presentation on their findings. Carefully structured individual provision enables the large number of bilingual pupils to make rapid progress, and to take a full part in all lessons.

The teaching of core values in the strong personal and social education programme enhances pupils' personal development. The curriculum is enriched in a wide variety of ways. A range of modern foreign languages is taught, both within the curriculum and as club activities. There are many opportunities for pupils to take part in a variety of sporting and artistic activities, and they benefit from regular visits and visitors to school.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

Outstanding provision helps pupils to achieve well and develop extremely good personal skills. The school knows its pupils' needs very well and has excellent systems for tracking their progress. It is especially effective in supporting the progress of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities and those from different ethnic backgrounds. Vulnerable

pupils are given extremely good support, backed by the school's very close links with external agencies.

The school undertakes thorough risk assessments for all activities, provides water for pupils to drink in lessons and offers healthy eating options at lunchtime. Procedures for child protection are securely established. Induction procedures and support for new arrivals, including many who have very limited English language skills, are outstanding. This enables the high numbers that join during the year to settle very quickly. The school's rigorous procedures to improve attendance have led to a significant recent improvement.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good and ensure that pupils achieve well within a caring Christian ethos. The headteacher has established a strong, shared commitment to valuing and including all children and families within the school's diverse community. A good leadership team, who have a clear focus on raising achievement and improving teaching, give effective support.

Self-evaluation is good and parents are fully consulted and involved in a range of issues. Leaders know the school well and take effective action to address any weaknesses. For example, significant changes were introduced to improve standards in English, led very effectively by the coordinator. A new approach to teaching reading, and innovative work in drama, speaking and listening raised achievement considerably, particularly in writing. Whilst very good work is also going on in other subjects, this is not yet consistent because a number of subject leaders are new. Not all of the school's initiatives are reflected in overall planning. This makes it difficult for leaders to evaluate their effectiveness.

Governors are fully committed to the school and bring a range of experience to their role. They understand the strengths and weaknesses of the school and offer a good balance of support and challenge. The school has made good improvements since the last inspection and is well placed to improve further because of the commitment of school leaders, staff and governors.

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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>	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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2	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	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1	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	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	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	1	NA

### The quality of provision

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

<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

Pupils

Thank you for all the help you gave us when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you and joining you in lessons. You told us that you enjoyed school, and we could see that you did. This is what we found out.

St Mary's is a good school. You are all learning a lot because your teachers are good at explaining things, and they prepare exciting and interesting activities for you. You are really good at English, especially writing. In most lessons, you get lots done, try hard and do work that is just right for you. Teachers are good at working out what you know, so they can plan what you need to learn next. You have lots of chances to talk to each other about work, and this helps you to learn. All those children who speak different languages at home are learning English really quickly, because the adults work hard to help you with this. Just occasionally, however, you get work that is too easy for some of you, or you don't get enough done in a lesson. We were really impressed by how well you behave and how well everyone gets on with each other, both working and playing. You and the staff are very good at helping new children to settle in and to feel at home. The adults keep a very careful eye on how you are getting on, and look after you really well. Most of you have good attendance, but a few of you take very long holidays, and this makes it hard to keep up with your work.

Mrs Morrison and the other adults are very good at organising the school and making sure everything works smoothly. We have suggested that, to get even better, they should make sure that the work you get is always just hard enough to be really challenging, and that lessons should all whiz along like the best ones. We also think that some of you should try harder to improve your attendance, so that you don't get left behind in your work.

We hope you carry on enjoying school and working hard. Thank you again for your help. Best wishes,

Steven Hill

Lead Inspector