



St Mary's Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 116394
LEA Hampshire LEA
Inspection number 279813
Inspection dates 11 October 2005 to 12 October 2005
Reporting inspector Michael Pye AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Anns Hill Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Gosport
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Hampshire PO12 3NB
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	02392583979
Number on roll	239	Fax number	02392584514
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Anne Gibbons
Date of previous inspection	13 November 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Carol McIvor

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

St Mary's is an average sized Roman Catholic primary school. It takes pupils from a wide area with only a few pupils coming from disadvantaged backgrounds. There is a high proportion of military service personnel in the area. Consequently a high number of pupils enter and leave the school other than in Reception or Year 6. Ethnic minority numbers are relatively low but some are at an early stage of learning English. The numbers of pupils with learning difficulties meets the national average, and those with statements just below average. For its teaching of literacy and numeracy skills the school has recently been re-awarded the Basic Skills Quality Mark. It is a member of the Brune Park Community School group. Pupils enter Reception with standards below those usually found.

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's provides an overall satisfactory education, although the school believes it is good. The good progress that pupils make in reception and Years 1 and 2 is not maintained in Years 3 to 6. This is largely the result of inconsistent levels of teaching and expectations of what pupils know and can do. Standards in Year 2 are high, but only satisfactory in Year 6. Pupils' personal development and well being, and the care and support provided, are good. Pupils enjoy school and work well because they feel safe and secure, and that all adults care for them. This view is supported by an overwhelming number of parents. One summed up the school as having 'a family-friendly feel which embraces and values every child individually and this helps them to develop'. Teaching and learning in reception are very good and pupils leave having met the expected levels for their age. Good progress is maintained in Years 1 and 2 with the school's focus on teaching reading having a significant impact on standards. In Years 3 to 6 pupils' progress slows, largely as a result of inconsistent levels of teaching and learning. The school has made satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. Standards in information and communication technology now meet national expectations as a result of improved resources. Planning for opportunities when pupils can use these skills in other subjects is inconsistent. The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory and in the Foundation Stage outstanding. The headteacher who is determined to bring about improvements is well supported by an enthusiastic governing body. Staff morale is high and all agree about the future direction of the school. Inspectors agree with the school that it has the capacity to improve, and that it provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

* Ensure the good progress made by pupils in reception and Years 1 and 2 is built on through improving the consistency of teaching and learning in Years 3 to 6.* Make fuller use of assessment data to plan appropriate work for different age and ability groups, and to set challenging end-of-year targets.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Data and observations show pupils make good or very good progress in reception as a result of some outstanding teaching. Most meet the learning goals expected at this age, providing pupils with a very secure foundation for their future academic and personal development. Good, consistent teaching in Years 1 and 2 contributes to the pupils meeting their targets and achieving high standards. Pupils are making very good progress in reading as a result of the school's strong focus on the teaching of this aspect of English. Progress in writing and mathematics is good because pupils attend school regularly and behave well so they can learn without interruption. These factors contribute to the high standards reached. In the 2004 national tests for pupils in year 6, standards in English, mathematics and science were satisfactory. When compared

with their results in Year 2, pupils in Year 6 make satisfactory progress. The trend looks to be similar in 2005. The quality of teaching varies and leads to inconsistent levels of challenge for pupils, which, in turn disrupts the previous good rate of progress. The school has identified some underachieving pupils, and extra support and targets have been put in place to accelerate their progress. This was successful in 2005, especially for the more able pupils who made good progress. However the school has not yet fully tackled the reasons for underachievement, such as the lack of challenging targets and focused support for some pupils in Years 3 to 6. Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress in meeting the targets set out for them in their individual education plans because they receive good support.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The school is correct in its view that it provides well for the personal development and well-being of its pupils. The caring and nurturing ethos of the school accentuates pupils' moral and spiritual development. Pupils' good behaviour reflects their clear understanding of right and wrong, as well as the need to be able to learn in a settled atmosphere. They talk eagerly about their responsibilities around the school and the opportunities to be a part of the whole school community. These successfully help pupils to develop the skills of co-operation and teamwork. The extent to which pupils' responsibility and initiative are encouraged in class is less well developed. The pupils' good personal development is demonstrated well when pupils help conduct the weekly parish mass, and in their charity work. Cultural development is satisfactory, although pupils are not fully aware of the multi-cultural nature of society today. Attendance is good because the pupils enjoy their school life and feel very safe. They work well together and help each other out. Where there has been bullying or disruptive behaviour pupils know that they can talk this over with staff, and that such incidents are dealt with promptly and carefully. Pupils have a good understanding of a healthy life style. Their economic well-being is promoted more strongly in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2 than in Years 3 to 6.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is wide ranging, but it is satisfactory overall. It is good in Years 1 and 2, outstanding in reception, but mostly satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. In Years 1 and 2, teachers often plan lessons that provide work that is well matched to children's needs. When teachers in Years 3 to 6 do not do this then the progress of pupils slows. For example, in a history lesson observed, an opportunity was missed to build-in harder work that would challenge the more able pupils. The strong emphasis placed on specific training for staff in teaching reading is proving successful in improving standards in Years 1 and 2. Staff set targets that motivate pupils to want to do their best and reflect their high expectations of what pupils can do in this area

of work. They back this up in class with some good probing questioning that test the pupils' understanding. In Years 3 to 6, teachers' expectations of pupils' achievements are not high enough, and work that challenges and meets the needs of pupils of different abilities is not planned consistently. As a result their progress is not as fast as it should be. Progress is better when the teacher has thought carefully about the main learning points of the lesson and explained them clearly. The pupils then know what they are expected to learn and can talk about it in effective end of lesson reviews. In reception teaching is very good and sometimes outstanding. Thorough planning means teaching methods are challenging for pupils, but also very enjoyable, resulting in rapid progress. Pupils can choose their activities and a teaching assistant contributes effectively to the assessment of pupils' progress. This means the next stages in their learning can be matched to needs very well.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory curriculum. It has developed a two year programme, which ensures that pupils in mixed age classes do not repeat work unnecessarily. However more needs to be done to boost standards in Years 3 to 6. Programmes of study for subjects other than English, mathematics and science are not fully developed. Also while computer skills are consistently taught, the school has yet to plan fully for their use in other subjects. The school, through its self evaluation processes has identified that links between subjects, to make learning more relevant and purposeful, need to be improved. There are clear plans to deal with this and so raise standards. The basic curriculum is enriched well by additional activities such as French, sporting activities and events such as the drama production of 'Joseph'. These promote pupils' confidence, healthy lifestyles and the ability to work together in teams. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the responsibilities they are given, as school council members or playground buddies. These enable them to contribute significantly to the school community and aid their personal development. Personal, social and health education develops a strong awareness of health and safety issues.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Inspectors agree with the school's evaluation that this is good. The school is very committed to the pupils' health, safety and welfare. Risk assessments are in place, are regularly reviewed and are known to staff. Consequently the pupils feel secure, safe and able to concentrate on their work, knowing that, in the words of one parent my child...can talk to her teacher and be listened to. Arrangements for child protection are robust. Appropriate support is given to learners because the school liaises effectively with parents and a wide range of external agencies. The school accurately assesses the pupils' personal needs. However the use of assessment data does not always lead to appropriate work being set for pupils of differing abilities, or to the establishment of challenging targets. Pupils with learning difficulties are involved well in discussions about their individual targets. They are able to understand these and track their own

progress because of the care that is taken to present them in a very pupil-friendly format.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school feels that they are good, but inspection evidence indicates weaknesses in the development of teaching and the use of assessment data. All staff are committed to ongoing improvement and the best interests of all pupils. Parents are extremely supportive of the headteacher and the staff, praising the levels of care and management in the school. The school consults with parents, governors, pupils and staff so as to identify areas for improvement. It has rightly identified the need to develop the use of assessment for target setting and the use of information and communication technology in the classroom. Senior managers monitor lessons but there has been insufficient action to improve consistency in the quality of teaching, especially in Years 3 to 6. The role of subject leaders in observing lessons and in the overall monitoring of progress, is under-developed. Consequently the impact of monitoring and evaluation has not been as effective as it should have been. Recent staff problems were managed very well through the determination of the headteacher, who provided much-needed stability and direction to the school during a period of significant upheaval. The Foundation Stage is very well led with strengths in teaching and planning. Governors have recently benefited from some very good training, resulting in an increased ability to support and guide the school. Together the headteacher and governors demonstrate that the school has the capacity to further improve.

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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?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	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?	3	NA
The standards ¹ 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	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	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	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	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?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	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

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 welcoming us into your school. We enjoyed talking to you about your work and your life in school. We listened carefully to what you had to say.

We liked these things most: * The way in which you are prepared to help each other and work well together. * Your good behaviour, which helps so much to make the school a friendly and welcoming place. * That you really enjoy the time you spend in school. * The way that you make healthy choices such as eating fruit regularly and taking exercise in the playground. * The way that those pupils with learning difficulties take part in discussions about their targets. * That you speak often about how safe you feel in the school and how you can go to an adult if you have a problem. * The way you remember your levels of work and that you have some idea about how to improve it. * The way that you make good progress in reception and Years 1 and 2.

We have asked your school to work on ways to: * Make all lessons good ones so that you learn faster in Years 3 to 6. * Use what teachers know about your work and progress to set you better targets to improve.