



St Mary's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Beverley

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 118030
LEA East Riding of Yorkshire
Inspection number 280220
Inspection dates 4 April 2006 to 4 April 2006
Reporting inspector Eric Jackson

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to inspect any school in England. The inspection is to be treated as a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary	School address	Eden Road
School category	Voluntary controlled		Beverley
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		HU17 7HD
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01482 868149
Number on roll	377	Fax number	01482 868149
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Cllr Jim Whitfield
Date of previous inspection	1 October 2000	Headteacher	Miss J A Cottingham

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two inspectors. During the one day visit, a variety of discussions took place with staff, governors, and children, including an informative meeting with the School Council. Observations were made of children at work, and of a fine Ancient Greek play dress rehearsal performed by Year 3 children. Detailed school self-evaluation information gave valuable and incisive insight into the school's view of itself that greatly helped inspectors in their judgement. Over 210 parents' questionnaires were analysed, and 12 parents gave their views of the school in a meeting with an inspector, helping the team in determining their views.

Description of the school

St Mary's is a larger than average Church of England primary school. It admits children to reception in the term they reach age five. Attainment at entry is broadly average, but covers a wide range. The number of children eligible for free school meals is below average, as is the number with learning difficulties or disabilities. There are very small numbers of children from minority ethnic groups, and no children learn English as an additional language. The school amalgamated with an infant school in 2002, and subsequent building work over the last four years has caused some disruption to children's education.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

St Mary's is a good school with outstanding features, reflecting the school's own view in its comprehensive self-evaluation. This is also the view of parents and children. One parent wrote, 'My child is taught in a positive environment that makes learning fun, and rewards achievement.' Year 6 children are passionate about the school. Once begun, it was almost impossible to break the flow of their supportive comments on its good qualities! The school has a deserved high reputation locally, and some parents described how hard they worked to get their children into this school from out of area.

The school takes excellent care of all children and its ethos is calm and supportive. All staff are fully committed to children's welfare. Children with learning difficulties or disabilities are well cared for, strongly supported in their learning, and included in all activities. One parent movingly described how the school had organised swift and effective assessment and provision for her child who has severe learning difficulties. She said, 'I want to stand on the roof and shout how good this school is!'

Children's personal development and well-being are outstanding. High attendance levels and the children's exemplary behaviour testify to their positive attitudes. Children really enjoy their work, particularly when they participate actively in varied and challenging tasks. A Year 6 child said, 'The teachers try to make every lesson fun.' Children work cooperatively with their teachers and each other, having many opportunities to develop their social skills well. They are questioning and curious about their community and the wider world, reinforced by their reflections on art and music. This excellent spiritual development is also supported strongly by the school's Christian ethos. The strong international dimension to the curriculum contributes strongly to children's cultural development.

Progress is currently good across the school, both in core subjects and in the wider curriculum. By the end of Year 6, results in national tests in English, mathematics and science have been significantly above average for the last five years. This represents good achievement since entry to reception, and is an important part of the school's popularity locally. Achievement and progress have been satisfactory recently by the end of Year 2, and the staff in Years 1 and 2 are working hard to raise standards further. Quality and provision in reception are good, and the classroom prepared for the new intake after Easter is impressive.

The key to the school's success is that leadership and management are good. The headteacher is an outstanding leader: she sets very clear direction for the school's development. She also ensures that everyone shares her vision and high expectations for the all round quality of children's education. This has helped the school to improve well since the last inspection. Having been unsatisfactory at the last inspection, governance is now satisfactory with good features. This is because the chair is active and involved, and is well supported by other governors in working with the school as a critical friend.

The senior leadership team assembled by the head and governors is strong, knowledgeable and active in assessing the school's work, and seeking improvement.

Having improved the quality of children's writing well from the weaknesses at the last inspection to high quality now across the curriculum, the school has recognised that mathematics needs a boost. Very specific and effective plans are currently being implemented to raise standards in the subject, with some success.

Teaching and learning are good, leading to good achievement overall and above average standards by the end of Year 6. The staff provide safe and enjoyable experiences, through which children learn to be healthy and physically active. Older children are very appreciative of the varied activities that the teachers provide to help them make progress. Children are encouraged to assess their own learning and understand their own targets for improvement. This helps them to be confident and aware learners. Staff explain clearly how they plan for all subjects as enthusiastically as they do for the core subjects. This results in good progress in such areas as art and design, design technology, music, drama and physical education.

The curriculum is good, and enrichment activities are outstanding: the school has deservedly achieved the Activemark and Artsmark gold standards. Year 6 children, unusually, mentioned every subject when asked for their favourite. There is strong concentration on the core subjects and ICT, but the staff make impressive links to the performing arts and sport. Years 3 to 6 each prepare and perform a dramatic production annually, praised by parents. During the inspection, Year 3 practised a Greek play with high level choral speaking, singing, dancing and artwork for the set. In another enterprising development, a mural artist designed and painted a Noah's Ark scene with groups of younger children who were delighted as the rainbow spread across the scene. There is also excellent participation in a wide range of extra-curricular activities.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement and standards are good overall, meeting the school's targets. Children with learning difficulties or disabilities are supported well and make good progress. English value added results for Year 6 were in the top 8% compared to similar schools in 2005. However, results in mathematics fell to broadly average levels, mainly because few girls reached above expected levels. Against the national trend, boys attained higher levels in Year 6 tests than girls. Results for Year 2 are usually high in reading, but fell to average levels in 2005. This is because the cohort of children has a high proportion of children with learning difficulties. The staff have taken immediate steps to improve children's achievement in mathematics, and to review assessment procedures. Children in reception make good progress and many of the older children reach the expected goals by age five.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Working relationships are extremely good and children have many opportunities to develop social skills through group work. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Children reflect well on their actions and their relationships

with each other. Those skills which will contribute to the children's future social and economic well-being are very well promoted. The school council plays an active role and has brought about changes, such as in promoting awareness of how to be healthy. Children actively engage in charity work which enables them to contribute to the wider community.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The staff's strong teamwork is key here, including the contribution of support staff, both in year groups and as a whole staff. The staff model how productive working relationships are essential to effective practice. Children follow the staff's example through their excellent behaviour and commitment in lessons. In an outstanding science lesson for Year 4, the teacher's excellent planning of challenging activities led children to develop very effective scientific methods to separate materials. The teachers' planning for learning in reception covers all the areas of experience well.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The staff have the same high expectations of children's involvement in such lessons as history and geography as they have in the core subjects. This ensures that the children's curricular experiences are wide and varied. There is also excellent participation in a wide range of extra-curricular activities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. Child protection procedures are well established and understood. Rigorous risk assessments demonstrate vigilance for children's safety. The school monitors children's academic and personal development carefully and has very effective guidance procedures to raise standards and promote children's confidence and maturity. Good links with local secondary schools ease their transition to the next stage of their education. Children settle quickly as they start in the reception class because of the caring and friendly welcome.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school makes every effort to keep parents fully informed about its work and their children's progress. The quality of the school's website testifies to this. In general, the partnership with parents is strong and supportive, and the school consults them about relevant issues, such as the new Travel Plan. A thorough consultation of the views of children was taken last term, and children have a voice through class discussions and

the School Council. The school knows itself well, and self-evaluation procedures are comprehensive, secure, accurate, and used effectively to drive improvement planning. The staff have maintained the strengths recognised in the previous inspection, successfully amalgamated with another school, and dealt effectively with the issues raised. Governors have put in place thoughtful strategic plans to use an unexpected financial surplus carefully over the next three years.

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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	1	NA
The attendance of learners	1	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	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

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?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	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	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

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06 April 2006

Dear Children

Thank you for welcoming Mr Dower and I when we visited your school before Easter. We really enjoyed our visit, and were very impressed by the Year 3 Greek play. It's good to have friends who can bring sunshine to make the flowers grow.

You will remember that we came to see how well your school looks after you and helps you to learn. You and almost all your parents told us that yours is a good school, and that some things are great. We agree with you. We believe that St Mary's is a good school with some outstanding features. It keeps you safe, helps you to live healthily and to enjoy your work. You help a great deal in this because you behave so well, work hard to achieve good standards, and show that you appreciate all the exciting things that happen there. We watched an artist and some young children painting a wall, and a rainbow appeared!

We feel that your head and staff plan your work very skilfully to give you a wide range of learning experiences. This helps you to do well in English, maths and science, but also in art, music, PE and games. I have looked at your website and it shows a wonderful picture of your activities. To help you make even better progress, we have asked the staff to help you more effectively in mathematics, so that more of you reach high levels. We would also like the Year 1 and 2 staff to challenge you younger children more in what you do so that they see you reach the high levels you are capable of by the time you move into Year 3. You can help by doing what you are already so good at – learning with enjoyment in a school that makes your learning fun.

With good wishes for your future, yours sincerely

Eric Jackson Lead Inspector and Brian Dower Team Inspector