



# St Mary's RC Primary School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 131418  
**LEA** Brent LEA  
**Inspection number** 282207  
**Inspection dates** 7 February 2006 to 8 February 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Barry Jones AI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Canterbury Road
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided		Kilburn
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11		London NW6 5ST
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	02076241830
<b>Number on roll</b>	372	<b>Fax number</b>	02073724932
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr R Dozie
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	6 November 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr A Reilly

<b>Age group</b> 3 to 11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 7 February 2006 - 8 February 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 282207
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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

St Mary's serves a community with extremely high deprivation. It has a high proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and particularly Black Caribbean heritage. One quarter of the pupils in the school have English as an additional language. The majority of the pupils are Roman Catholic. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is higher than in most schools but is average for the proportion with statements of special educational need.

## **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 is a satisfactory school with some good features; it provides sound value for money. The quality of care is high and a strong Catholic ethos permeates school life. Many pupils enter the school from very disadvantaged backgrounds and with poor social skills, but they develop well. They acquire a strong awareness of spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues. The school is a multi-cultural community in which there is racial harmony. Teachers set good role models and the pupils respond by behaving well. Pupils enjoy coming to school and feel safe. The school has a very good partnership with its parents and they speak highly of the school. The school judges itself as good. Inspectors disagree because teaching and pupils' achievements are satisfactory. Standards are below national averages but overall show satisfactory progress from pupils' starting points. Strengths in performance are the improvements in standards in Year 2 and pupils do consistently well in English tests at age 11 years. Those pupils with learning difficulties who receive targeted support make satisfactory and often good progress. However, those few who do not receive additional support do not make the progress they should. This had not been identified by the school because it has weak procedures for monitoring the progress made by pupils. There has also been a decline in science standards over the last three years and some low performance in mathematics. Developments in these areas have been hindered by high staff turnover and difficulties in recruiting suitable replacements. Progress since the previous inspection has been satisfactory. The main weakness then was in the Foundation Stage. This has been addressed well and the quality of education for the youngest children is now good and they make good progress. Leadership and management have effectively maintained good care but have not focused sufficiently on raising standards. This is now recognised by the new management team and action plans have been devised to improve standards in mathematics and science. The school is well placed to improve further.

### What the school should do to improve further

\* Raise the standards in mathematics and science by raising the quality of teaching in Years 1 to 6 and implementing the new action plans\* Ensure that all pupils with learning difficulties make progress which is at least satisfactory\* Establish effective procedures for monitoring the progress made by pupils.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

Pupils achieve satisfactorily although there are yearly variations and differences between subjects. In the national assessments at age seven, there is improvement at a greater rate than nationally. This partly reflects significant improvement in the quality of education in the Foundation Stage since the previous inspection. In the national tests at age eleven, there is a downward trend with a marked decline in the 2005 results. This is mostly explained by the exceptionally low starting points of these pupils.

However, English results were broadly average but those for mathematics and science were exceptionally low. English has benefited from extra resources, good quality training through the National Literacy Strategy and a strong commitment from all staff. The low results in mathematics reflect underperformance by some pupils throughout the school. The school recognises that it has been too complacent and has not acted until recently to remedy the decline in science over the last three years. This has been partly due to inconsistencies in the leadership for science due to staff turnover. Minority ethnic groups all make satisfactory progress. Girls do better than boys, as they do nationally. The majority of pupils with learning difficulties make sound and often good progress. However, a minority do not receive additional support and they make less progress. The school usually meets its targets but they are not always challenging.

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

### **Grade: 2**

This is a significant strength and explains why pupils take pride in their school. They enjoy school and as one said, 'It is great and the teachers make it fun to learn in lessons'. Many pupils come from neighbourhoods where there are high levels of crime. However, in school they feel safe and know who to turn to if they have concerns. The few instances of bullying are dealt with swiftly and effectively. Pupils behave well and the school is orderly. There is a strong Catholic ethos and this is reflected in the good relationships and harmonious mixing of different racial groups. Pupils are courteous, tolerant and respectful. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. This accords with the school maxim 'love one another as I have loved you'. Pupils contribute well to the community and they raise money for charities. The school council is effective and has influenced decision-making; their ideas for improving the playground and the toilets have been accepted. Pupils make satisfactory progress in acquiring skills for later life. Their economic well-being is boosted further by the good links with the secondary schools. Attendance remains below average, although the school is doing all it can to improve it. Pupils' awareness of healthy living is satisfactory.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching is good for the youngest children; they are given a wide range of activities and learn well. In Years 1 to 6 teaching is satisfactory but there is a more limited range of strategies used. Teachers work hard, know their subjects and are good at managing classes. Instructions are clear so that pupils know what they should be doing and have positive attitudes. Teachers plan work for different abilities in all subjects. This is most successful in English. It is partially achieved in mathematics and science by some new setting arrangements in Year 6. However, in a Year 6 science lesson, classes were merged and good teamwork produced a stimulating presentation on planetary motion which made effective use of a computer for display. The follow-up work was done in

three ability groups but the same task was set for each group. There is overuse of worksheets in some subjects and monitoring by the school reveals that pupils do not do sufficient practical work in science. Where classroom assistants are present, they support teachers well and work effectively with pupils. Teachers mark pupils' work conscientiously but there are too few written comments to show how work might be improved.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum is satisfactory with some good aspects. Teachers plan their lessons around a common theme. When the links between subjects are well-developed then learning becomes more exciting and more meaningful to pupils. For example, effective links are made between healthy eating and the topic of food in the reception class, as well as in the English curriculum in Years 1 to 6. The school recognises the need to develop these creative links still further, particularly in Years 3 to 6. Pupils do not get the nationally recommended time for physical education, although there are good opportunities to join clubs such as the one conducted by the local professional football club. The range of extra-curricular activities is good and includes a residential trip and local visits. These effectively support and extend the learning of pupils. Since the previous inspection, provision for information and communication technology has improved but computers are not used consistently to support learning in other subjects. The pupils' personal development is well supported through the opportunities they have for discussion during their personal, social, and health education lessons. In the Foundation Stage, children benefit from wide range of activities and there is a good balance of directed and free-choice time.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The quality of care is high and the friendly, welcoming ethos of the school is immediately apparent to visitors. The school works well with parents and agencies to ensure pupils' well-being. The school meets all requirements for health and safety and risk assessments are completed well. Child protection procedures are well established and they are clearly understood by staff. Consequently, pupils feel safe and secure. They have many ways to seek advice and guidance including mailboxes for written comments, the behaviour support office, and a counselling service. In addition, the school makes effective use of a family liaison officer to support families and a transition teacher to help pupils when they move schools. There is good support for traveller children and they settle well at the school. Guidance is satisfactory but assessments are not always used well to monitor the progress made by pupils.

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## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

Leadership and management are effective in delivering good care. Senior managers have pastoral responsibilities in particular year groups and these are carried out very effectively. The Foundation Stage is well led. There is tracking of pupils' progress that is used to target support where it is needed. This tracking process is only just being established in Years 1 to 6. It does mean, however, that underachievement by some pupils with learning difficulties and in science have not been identified early enough and so swift action was not taken. The school is very open and willing to improve but it has not always had detailed data for groups of pupils within the school. As a result, self-evaluation is only satisfactory. There has been a rigorous response by the school to the low results in 2005 although developments have been hindered by the high staff turnover and difficulties in recruiting well-qualified replacements. The new science coordinator is providing good leadership. She has consulted others, analysed the Year 6 test results, disseminated the main messages to other teachers and drawn up a plan which should lead to improved results in the future. There is a similar plan for mathematics. However, there is insufficient support for a few pupils with learning difficulties and there is no firm plan to rectify this. The school consults widely, including with parents, and the headteacher has a clear understanding of what needs to be done. The governors are supportive. The school's track record and the actions taken mean that it is well placed to improve 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>	<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	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

<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	2	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	3	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>	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	2	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

<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	NA
<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**

Thank you for your help when we inspected your school. St Mary's is very friendly and welcoming to visitors and this is a tribute to you and your teachers. As one of you said to us, "It is not a good school; it's a lovely school with good friendships". We enjoyed talking to you. Your school council members told us how they have put forward suggestions to the teachers that have been accepted. This has led to improvements in the playground and toilets. You told us that you enjoy coming to school and feel safe there.

There is much that we like about your school. There is a good sense of belonging and pupils help one another. You have many different backgrounds, show respect for one another and are well behaved. Children in the nursery and the reception classes get a good start to their school life. Not all pupils have English as their home language. The school knows this and so makes special efforts to help all pupils to use English well. As a result pupils do well in English. Pupils used to do well in science too but not in last year's tests for eleven year-olds. The school is doing a number of things to improve.

There are three things that we are asking the school to do to make things better. We want the school to help you to do even better work in mathematics and science. You can play your part by working really hard in these subjects. In particular, we want the school to make sure all pupils with learning difficulties do as well as they can. We are asking the school to check your progress so that they know this happening. Once again, thank you for the way you looked after us.