

St Mary's RC Infants' School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102995
Local Authority	Sutton
Inspection number	286543
Inspection date	22 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Marianne Harris

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3-7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	232
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs T Walsh
Headteacher	Mrs M Sinclair
Date of previous school inspection	9 July 2001
School address	West Street Carshalton SM5 2PT
Telephone number	020 8647 5711
Fax number	020 8773 2582

Age group	3-7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is an average sized infant school in a socially advantaged area. The proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is well below average. Most of the pupils are from a White British heritage and a few have an ethnic minority background. There are no pupils who are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and disabilities, including those who have a statement of need, is below average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school where pupils make excellent progress, and achieve very well, whatever their ability. One parent wrote that 'there is a real sense of community in the school' and another commented that 'my children are looked after academically and emotionally'. Pupils receive excellent care, guidance and support because all the staff work together very well to make sure that pupils make as much progress as possible. Consequently standards are well above average in reading, writing and mathematics, and pupils are really keen to learn.

The school is extremely well led and managed so that pupils not only reach very high standards but also develop the personal skills they will need in later life. Much emphasis is put on helping pupils understand about keeping healthy and many report that they really enjoy the physical activities that are provided by the school. Pupils make a very good contribution to the local community and raise much money for good causes. The curriculum is excellent. Very good use is made of the beautiful grounds so that pupils can learn outside the classroom. Pupils are enthusiastic about all the opportunities they have to experience activities outside of normal lessons. Planning is excellent so that subjects are effectively linked together to make learning interesting and relevant to the pupils. Children in the Foundation Stage have a very good start to their education because provision is outstanding. Teaching and learning across the school are excellent. Teachers and teaching assistants work together very well to make sure pupils make as much progress as possible. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are very well supported and often reach standards in national assessments that are in line with those expected for their age.

The school has a very good tracking system that charts the progress each child makes from the time they enter the Foundation Stage until the time they leave in Year 2. The information this generates is used very effectively to identify pupils who may need extra support. It is also used to set targets for pupils in each class so that they know what they need to do to reach higher standards.

The vast majority of parents are very supportive of the school. They report that the staff and governors are all very approachable and that the Catholic ethos is evident throughout all aspects of the school's work. A minority of parents commented on the opportunities they have to discuss their children's progress with teachers. Whilst most appreciate the chance to discuss their children's targets on a regular basis, they would like the opportunity to talk to teachers on a more formal basis when their children are not present.

There has been excellent improvement since the last inspection. The issues have been tackled very effectively and standards have remained very high. The governors support the staff very well and are currently instrumental in the school working towards offering extended services to pupils and their families. There is excellent capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide an opportunity for parents to meet with teachers so that the progress of their children can be discussed when their children are not there.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Children's attainment on entry to the school varies each year. Although some have above average ability, overall attainment on entry is broadly average. In the Foundation Stage children make very good progress in all areas of learning, particularly in their personal development, so that by the time they join Year 1 standards are above average. This very good progress continues through Years 1 and 2, and by the time they leave for their next school standards in national assessments for reading, writing and mathematics are well above average. This represents excellent achievement for all pupils, whatever their ability. The school's own data and work seen confirms that standards remain very high.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development, including all aspects of their spiritual, moral, social and cultural education, is excellent. In discussions pupils talk enthusiastically about how to keep healthy and many have participated in the national 'walk to school' week. They wear their badges with pride, showing everyone that they have walked to school. Pupils look after each other and members of the school council are very keen to talk about the 'playground pals' who make sure that everyone is happy during break times. These 'pals' try to sort out any minor squabbles and know that there is someone they can go to if issues cannot be resolved quickly. Pupils raise much money for local and national causes and speak highly of all of the visitors into school who help them learn about other cultures and beliefs. Behaviour is exemplary and pupils report that they really enjoy coming to school and love learning. This is reflected in the fact that attendance is above average and pupils are usually punctual because they are eager to learn.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teaching and learning are outstanding. Pupils know exactly what they are going to learn because the purpose of each lesson is explained very clearly. Lessons move at a brisk pace and learning is planned very well to meet the needs of all abilities within the class. During lessons there are regular reviews to make sure pupils know what they are doing and any mistakes are rectified. Teachers pay particular attention to making sure that learning is interesting by linking subjects together. One parent commented, 'Our son finds the teaching enjoyable and challenging and therefore wants to learn.' Teaching assistants form a very successful part of the teaching team. They support pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and work with other groups within the class. They are very well deployed so that their particular expertise is maximised.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The school provides an excellent curriculum that is enriched extremely well with many activities outside normal lessons. There are a great many clubs for all pupils to join. Pupils really enjoy the sporting activities and the opportunities they have to sing with the choir. Many visitors come into school and the pupils talk enthusiastically about the dance and drama companies who make subjects like history come to life. They also talk about all of the parents and visitors

who hear them read, help them in the library and spend time talking to them. Pupils take great pride in the area that has been developed quite recently to enable them to learn outside. The area is beautiful with a water feature and a garden that is very well tended. Children in the Nursery grow their own fruit and vegetables and learn how to look after young plants. The programme that supports pupils' personal development is excellent and helps pupils of all ages to learn how to look after each other and appreciate the beliefs and cultures of others.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Pupils receive excellent care, guidance and support. Teachers spend time talking to them about their work and making sure that they know how to improve. All staff have received training in first aid, and pupils with particular medical needs are well known to all so that there can be a quick response in an emergency. Child protection procedures are robust and all staff are regularly trained. The school has a very good tracking system that is based on regular assessments in reading, writing, mathematics and science. This gives an accurate picture of the progress that each pupil makes and any who are not achieving the expected progress can be quickly identified. Appropriate support is put in place and regular reviews mean that pupils soon catch up. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are very well supported with targets that are realistic and this enables them to make very good progress. The targets set for all pupils are shared with parents and their children at a consultation evening. Parents appreciate this, although some say that they would like an opportunity to talk to their child's teacher without their child present so that any confidential matters can be openly discussed.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management at all levels are excellent. All staff work extremely well together to make sure that all pupils can make as much progress as possible. The governors are very good and support the school extremely well, having the welfare of the staff and pupils as a high priority. They are constant visitors to the school, helping and supporting in any way they can. The leadership team has been very successful in maintaining the standards reported at the time of the last inspection and all staff and governors are fully aware of the challenge this presents. The work of the whole school is regularly reviewed so that the assessment they have made of their work is very accurate. All staff are involved in this and many take on extra responsibilities to make sure that all pupils achieve very well both academically and personally.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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?	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

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

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

7 June 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of St Mary's RC Infants' School, Carshalton, SM5 2PT

Thank you so much for welcoming me into your school a few days ago and for spending the time talking to me about your work. I am now writing to you to let you know what I found out about your excellent school.

You told me that you enjoy coming to school and that you love learning. I was very impressed when I visited your lessons and particularly liked looking at your work. I think you are all very friendly and polite and I particularly liked the way you look after each other. Your behaviour is amongst the best I have ever seen. You work very hard and make very good progress because your teachers are excellent and you are all very keen to learn. When I had a walk around your school I really liked the beautiful outdoor area and the school council is rightly very proud of it. You told me that your 'playground pals' are especially good at sorting out any squabbles you may have. Some of you told me that you enjoy learning outside and that children in the Nursery are very clever at growing their own food.

Many of your parents wrote to me to tell me how much they like your school. They think that you are all lucky to have such a good school. Some of your families said that they like the opportunities they have to talk to your teachers about the targets that you have been set. This is a good idea because you are usually part of those chats as well. However, some parents said that they would like the opportunity to talk to your teachers when you weren't there and I have asked your headteacher to provide an opportunity for them to talk privately to your teachers.

Once again thank you for making me feel so welcome and for helping me to find out about your school. I wish you good luck in the future.

Marianne Harris Lead inspector