



St Mary's CofE Junior and Infant School (NC)

Inspection Report - Amended

Unique Reference Number 103403
Local Authority Birmingham
Inspection number 286649
Inspection date 8 November 2006
Reporting inspector Martin Kerly

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Hamstead Road
School category	Voluntary controlled		Handsworth
Age range of pupils	3-11		Birmingham B20 2RW
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0121 5543751
Number on roll (school)	337	Fax number	0121 5543335
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	B A Hall
		Headteacher	Ava Packer
Date of previous school inspection	12 February 2001		

Age group 3-11	Inspection date 8 November 2006	Inspection number 286649
--------------------------	---	------------------------------------

Amended Report Addendum

Report amended due to administration error

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The school is larger than average. Pupils come from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds, but many are from areas of social and economic disadvantage. Almost all pupils are from minority ethnic groups, with no one group being in the majority. More than half have a home language other than English and around one third of children are at an early stage of English language acquisition on entry to the school. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is well above that usually found as is the proportion of those in public care. Around half the children who attend the Nursery class transfer into St Mary's Reception classes. A substantial proportion of children in Reception have not attended the Nursery or any other pre-school provision.

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. It has some outstanding features and provides very well for all its pupils. The inspirational leadership by the headteacher, along with the commitment and expertise of the whole staff team, contribute to the pupils' excellent personal development and well-being, including their outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school very successfully values and celebrates the exceptionally diverse range of cultural heritages within its own Christian foundation. This promotes exceptionally strong relationships between pupils of all ethnic groups, faiths and cultures. One parent wrote, 'The school is a living, breathing example of what multiculturalism is supposed to be about – everyone contributing their different cultures and talents to a happy and productive community.'

Pupils' excellent attitudes to learning, along with good teaching, are significant factors in the good academic achievement by pupils. A good curriculum is carefully planned to respond to the pupils' different interests and skills. Attainment on entry to the school is below and in some aspects well below national expectations. Children make good progress as a result of good provision in the Foundation Stage, but by the end of Reception children's attainment is still below national expectations. Good progress is maintained throughout Years 1 to 6, particularly by boys, so that by the end of Year 6 overall standards in English, mathematics and science are comfortably in line with the national average, and in 2006 national tests science standards were above the national average. However, standards in information and communication technology (ICT), whilst improving, remain below national expectations. Care, guidance and support of pupils are good overall, and pupils are exceptionally well cared for. Those who are most vulnerable, including those with learning difficulties and those at an early stage of learning English, are supported most effectively by the extensive team of teachers and teaching assistants, helping many to achieve very well. In setting pupils targets for their work in mathematics lessons, teachers' expectations are not always high enough. As a result, for some pupils' progress in mathematics, whilst satisfactory, is not as good as that in other subjects.

Leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher provides an excellent lead. She is well supported by an evolving leadership team, many of whom have very recently taken on new responsibilities. The school has comprehensive systems for assessing pupils' attainment and very detailed data on individual pupils' performance. However, it does not fully track and analyse their progress over time and is not quick enough at identifying some of the differences in performance between different groups of pupils and subjects. Otherwise, good monitoring systems by the headteacher and leadership team give the school an accurate view of its performance. Effective steps have been taken since the last inspection to maintain previous strengths. The school has clearly identified priorities for the future and is well placed to improve further

What the school should do to improve further

- Make better use of individual performance data in order to track pupils' long-term progress and identify any patterns and trends in the performance of groups of pupils.
- Improve the rate of progress in mathematics by increasing teachers' expectations of all pupils.
- Use the recently improved equipment to raise standards in ICT across the curriculum.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils of all abilities achieve well. Standards continue to rise and are in line with the national average by the end of Year 6. Overall, children's attainment on joining the school is below that expected for their age. This is particularly so for their personal, social and emotional development and their English language skills. Despite good progress most pupils are still below the nationally agreed goals by the end of Reception. In Years 1 to 6 pupils achieve well. By the end of Year 2 standards are only marginally below the national average. By the end of Year 6 standards in English, mathematics and science are in line with the national average, with a higher proportion than normal attaining national expectations. This reflects the good achievement by many pupils, particularly the large group with learning difficulties and those for whom English is an additional language. Some groups of boys achieve particularly well. Some groups of girls do not achieve as well as the boys and overall progress in mathematics, whilst satisfactory, is not as good as in English and science. The school recognises standards in ICT remain below national expectations. They are improving but have not fully benefited from the recently acquired new equipment. Pupils in Year 6 are on track to meet their challenging targets for 2007 maintaining an overall upward trend in standards.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils of all faiths and cultures respond very well to the many high quality opportunities for spiritual reflection and take pride in their respective cultural differences and similarities. One Year 6 pupil summed this up with the comment, 'At St Mary's all our cultures are appreciated.' Many events and festivals are celebrated and pupils are encouraged to use their home languages in public, for example when giving performances. Pupils' behaviour is good and their attitudes to one another and school are frequently excellent. Pupils' self-esteem is boosted by an exceptionally wide range of awards and certificates. They enjoy school and talk about it most enthusiastically, calling it 'brilliant'. Attendance has improved significantly and is now in line with the national average. Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe and the importance of a healthy diet and exercise. They help care for and contribute to the school community in many ways, including being trained as peer mediators, doing simple daily jobs, and agreeing class rules. School councillors are proud of their

contributions although they do not yet take full responsibility for managing their business. Some pupils attend Birmingham Young People's Parliament and almost all thoughtfully support various local and national charities. Their effective contribution to such activities and good development of literacy and numeracy skills ensure that they are well prepared for later life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils respond to their lessons in a very positive and enthusiastic way, enjoying their own learning successes and wanting to please. Teachers create an exceptionally stimulating environment in almost all classrooms and around the school, helping to celebrate pupils' learning and motivate them further. They skilfully integrate opportunities for pupils to use their home language, for example when working together in pairs, whilst effectively promoting pupils' English language skills by providing a good literate environment with lots of word lists, prompts and ideas. Teachers are using an increasing range of ways to assess their pupils and are involving the pupils more in these. Consequently work set is usually carefully planned to match the needs of different ability groups. However, on occasions, for example in some mathematics lessons, work set is not challenging enough, especially for more able pupils whose short-term targets are too easy. Teaching assistants and learning mentors work effectively to support specific individuals and groups, enabling these pupils to learn well.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum meets national requirements and responds to pupils' own interests and backgrounds. There are growing curricular links between the Nursery, Reception and Year 1, although free access to the outside areas is physically limited restricting children's independent movement and choice. There is a good focus on developing enquiry skills, for example in geography. Different subjects are being increasingly linked in topics. The school effectively ensures that pupils' own cultures and family backgrounds are considered, for example when reflecting on the contribution of communities around the world in a display of work on World War 2. The personal, social and emotional curriculum is strong and integral to the school's work. The use of ICT across the curriculum is satisfactory although the school recognises this as a continuing priority for development. There is a good range of clubs, activities and visits beyond the classroom which enrich the curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The levels of care and support are particularly strong. The most vulnerable pupils are nurtured by the large team of assistants and by their peers, enabling them to flourish and become valued members of the school community, often as a result of skilled one-to-one mentoring. The school works closely with pupils' families and helps gain access to additional help when needed. Pupils receive excellent personal support and guidance and good academic guidance. Pupils know about their short-term targets for literacy and numeracy. Most of these targets are sufficiently challenging but in some cases they are too easy, particularly in mathematics, slowing their rate of progress. The school effectively implements the statutory procedures designed to ensure the safety and protection of pupils. Governors recognise the need to refurbish the boys' toilets.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher provides outstanding leadership and is an excellent role model for all connected with the school. Her commitment, energy and determination successfully promote the pupils' exceptional personal development and their good academic achievement. The recently restructured leadership team provides good support. The school's involvement in many local and city-wide projects and community initiatives contributes strongly to the pupils' overall experiences and to the professional development and fulfilment of staff. 'You too can fulfil your dream', the message displayed boldly in the entrance hall, resonates throughout the school. There are good monitoring systems involving a range of senior staff in observations and analyses of work. However, there is an over-reliance on outside agencies to analyse the pupils' performance data. The leadership team is aware that it does not have a clear enough system for tracking progress by pupils over time or identifying all the patterns and trends between groups of pupils and subjects. The headteacher and governors work effectively together on strategic issues. Governors know the school well. They make difficult decisions when called upon, for example in managing contentious personnel issues and an inherited deficit budget. The very recently completed new classroom block and lift have improved the accommodation.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	-----------------------

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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

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	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	2

The quality of provision

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

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.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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

I recently visited your school for a day to find out how well the school is doing. I thoroughly enjoyed talking to a number of you in lessons and around the school, and meeting members of your school council. Thank you for making me so welcome.

I am pleased to say that for lots of reasons I found that St Mary's CE Primary School is a good school and some things are excellent. Here are some of the best things about it:

- You work well in lessons and make good progress in your work.
- You are all extremely thoughtful about each other and about your different beliefs and customs.
- You behave well and really enjoy your time in school.
- Your teachers make sure your classrooms are lively places, and they set you lots of interesting things to do
- Everyone who works in the school makes sure that you are safe and cares about you, especially when you have problems.
- The headteacher works very hard indeed to make the school such a good place to be in.

To make the school even better, I have asked the headteacher, staff and governors to work together on just three things:

- Make better use of the information about how well you are doing to check that all groups make good progress in all subjects from one year to the next.
- Help you do even better in mathematics.
- Use the new equipment to help you develop your information and communication technology (ICT) skills in lots of lessons.

I hope you all continue to enjoy your time at St Mary's.