



St Mary's Church of England Primary School, West Derby

Inspection Report

Better
education
and care

Unique Reference Number 104624
Local Authority Liverpool
Inspection number 286991
Inspection dates 1–2 November 2006
Reporting inspector Mike McLachlan

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Meadow Lane
School category	Voluntary aided		Liverpool
Age range of pupils	4–11		Merseyside L12 5EA
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0151 2262038
Number on roll (school)	216	Fax number	0151 2565963
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Canon R Wikeley
		Headteacher	Miss P James
Date of previous school inspection	1 October 2001		

Age group 4–11	Inspection dates 1–2 November 2006	Inspection number 286991
--------------------------	----------------------------------------------	------------------------------------

© 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 two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

St Mary's is situated in West Derby in North Liverpool. The proportion of children entitled to free school meals is well below average but the school draws a significant number of pupils from wards which have considerable social and economic deprivation. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. There are very few pupils from minority ethnic groups. The school has achieved the National Healthy Schools Award and is a Centre of Excellence for language teaching (French) in partnership with a neighbouring primary school.

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 with outstanding features where pupils, parents and staff feel part of a caring and supportive Christian community. Pupils reach above average standards by the time they leave school. This represents good achievement given their broadly average starting point on entry to the school. Pupils in the Reception year achieve well because of the good quality of teaching and outstanding support they receive. At all ages, pupils are enthusiastic learners who respond very well to the active way many lessons are taught.

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. Pupils become mature, responsible young people by the time they leave school at the end of Year 6. They enjoy their time in school and demonstrate this by their excellent attendance and exemplary behaviour. Pupils care for and about each other and treat everyone with warmth and respect. The school has an excellent record in promoting healthy lifestyles and has achieved the National Healthy Schools Award. Pupils like the healthy food options and participating in the many sporting activities. The varied range of in-school and out-of-school activities helps develop pupils' self-confidence and prepare them very effectively for their future stages in school and work.

The quality of teaching and learning is good, with some outstanding features. Teachers use their expertise well to make learning fun and interesting and pupils respond eagerly to this approach. Strong relationships are a positive feature of all lessons and the teaching of academic and personal skills is often seamless. In some lessons the range of work set is too narrow and does not always challenge the higher-attaining pupils sufficiently. The school has recently introduced a target setting system in English and mathematics that is beginning to help pupils understand for themselves when they have reached their goals.

The curriculum is broad and balanced and enhanced by some excellent enrichment activities. It promotes pupils' good academic and personal achievements well. Pupils of all ages show high levels of enthusiasm in learning French and make progress in developing their skills in this subject. There are outstanding links with the local community, other schools and outside agencies to enrich pupils' social and cultural experiences and to provide additional support for those who need it.

Pupils are guided well in their learning. Whole-school systems for monitoring pupils' progress are well developed. There is a strong focus on health and safety. Systems for child protection and the vetting of adults who work with pupils are in place.

The school is well led and managed. The headteacher provides very good and principled leadership that enables all children and staff to feel valued. This has been an important strength in ensuring the minimum of disruption to pupils' learning and teachers' work during the protracted rebuilding programme. Leaders at all levels analyse the school strengths and weaknesses well. The extension of the subject leaders' role to include more direct monitoring of lessons is a good feature of the school's development plan. The school has the overwhelming support and confidence of the parents and the governing body is a critical yet supportive friend. The school has improved well since

the last inspection and has a good capacity to improve further. It provides good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the more able pupils are provided with sufficient challenge in their learning in all lessons to help raise achievement further.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well. Children start in the Reception class with standards that are broadly as expected for their age and make good progress in all areas of their learning due to the good quality of teaching. Pupils continue to make good progress throughout school and, by the end of Years 2 and 6, pupils' attainment is above average. This represents good achievement from their starting points. In the 2005 tests, some of the more able pupils in Year 6 did not do as well as expected. The school identified this as an area of concern and introduced strategies that brought about immediate improvements, as seen in the results in 2006 and during the inspection. More is still to be done to ensure that the more able pupils are consistently challenged. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities also achieve well because of the well targeted support they receive.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being are at the heart of all the school provides. As a result, pupils flourish and become caring, responsible and mature young people by the time they leave. Pupils love coming to school and involve themselves enthusiastically in all that it offers. They show high regard for each other and for visitors. Attendance is excellent and the popular pre-school activities ensure that all are punctual. There is a very strong focus on promoting healthy lifestyles, and the school has worked very hard to ensure that all are involved in sporting activities despite the considerable disruption of the building programme. Pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a key strength of the school. Many visitors share their expertise and beliefs and broaden pupils' horizons and understanding of other cultures and religions that are different to their own. Pupils' views are sought and acted upon and they willingly take on a range of responsibilities. They are well prepared for their next school and life beyond. This is clearly a happy, family school where each individual pupil matters.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

A broad range of strengths characterises the good quality of teaching and learning. Clear explanations ensure that pupils know what they are going to learn and what they need to do in the lesson. Pupils are often active learners who have fun while developing important skills. For example, music and movement is used very effectively to help pupils remember new vocabulary in French and pupils show very good levels of maturity when discussing the properties of liquids and solids in science. The new system of target setting in lessons is helping teachers to have a greater awareness of the levels at which pupils are working and what they can be expected to achieve. However, the school rightly recognises that the system could be used more consistently to raise the level of challenge for the more able pupils. Good work and effort is regularly rewarded so pupils feel proud of their achievements. Pupils' work is marked regularly and the teachers' comments help pupils know what to do to improve. Teaching assistants provide effective support to pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and ensure that they meet the targets on their individual educational plans.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. Strong emphasis is given to teaching basic skills in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology. The needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are met well. Provision for personal, social and health education is good and together with an extensive physical education curriculum helps pupils to adopt safe, healthy lifestyles and to grow in confidence. The creative programme for teaching French is enjoyed by staff and pupils alike. An outstanding range of additional activities, including visits and residential activities, enrich pupils' experiences and provide exciting challenges. For example, pupils speak with pride of their elation when reaching the summit of Moel Famau. Pupils also talk with enthusiasm about coaching sessions from Liverpool Football Club and their enjoyment of the Mighty Zulu Nation Theatre visit.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Trusting relationships between pupils and adults are at the heart of the outstanding care and personal support provided for pupils. Pupils enjoy coming to school, secure in the knowledge that caring adults are always on hand to ease any anxieties they may have. Reception children quickly learn the school routines and this allows them to work and play safely together. Incidents of bullying are rare and are dealt with swiftly and effectively if they arise. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive sensitive support from their teachers and teaching assistants. The great majority of pupils are guided well in their learning and whole-school systems for tracking pupils'

progress are used effectively to ensure that they achieve well, although, as the school recognises, some of the more able pupils could be further challenged in lessons. The recently introduced targets in English and mathematics are beginning to motivate pupils well. One pupil commented, 'I like this because you have something to work towards.' Health and safety and child protection procedures are in place and the school follows national guidelines on the safe recruitment of staff. Parents agree that their children feel safe and very well cared for. One commented that all staff 'always go the extra mile to ensure children feel safe and happy'.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management throughout the school are good. Senior managers and subject leaders know the strengths and areas that need to be developed further. The school has good systems for evaluating its work, which involve staff and the governing body well. Judgements made are accurate if sometimes rather modest. The headteacher has high expectations and provides a clear, purposeful direction for the school. The caring, supportive leadership qualities help staff and pupils feel valued. Professional development is given a high priority as the school strives constantly to improve. For example, the school has provided training for subject leaders to monitor the quality of teaching and its impact on learning and to support teachers and pupils in using the class and pupil target setting system. The leadership and governors are not complacent and have a good capacity to bring about further improvements.

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	2
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	1
The attendance of learners	1
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?	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?	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.

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 would like to thank you on behalf of the inspection team for the way in which you made us feel part of your family at St Mary's. We were very impressed with the way you so enthusiastically talked to us about your life in school during lessons and at lunchtime. You were a great credit to your teachers, your helpers and your families.

You clearly love coming to school and enjoy all the many activities provided for you in and out of the classroom. We could see how much you enjoyed the visit by the professional footballer and the television cameras during our inspection. We think that you work very hard but have fun while you are learning. Your excellent behaviour and attendance show this. This means that you not only learn a lot but you are also become very confident and mature young people ready to move on to the high school.

We think that you are taught well and that you are good learners. We saw that in lots of the lessons we watched. You were often involved in learning in a practical and an active way so that you enjoyed learning new things. For example, we were very impressed with the way you discussed some difficult work in science or learned how to speak in French through actions and singing.

You told us you like the new targets you get in English and mathematics. We thought it would be helpful if work was a little more challenging for some of you, to help you think harder. You could help with this by saying when you think the work is a little too easy or that you are sure you can do it already.

We think all the staff work very hard to make sure you feel safe and we could clearly see that your headteacher and other adults were working hard to try and make your school even better. Your lovely new buildings are a great example of this. We can clearly see why you and so many of your mums and dads told us how much you like your good school.