



St Mary's Church of England Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 106106
Local Authority Stockport
Inspection number 287416
Inspection dates 8–9 March 2007
Reporting inspector Derek Aitken

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Broomfield Drive
School category	Voluntary controlled		South Reddish, Stockport
Age range of pupils	5–11		Cheshire SK5 7DR
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0161 4804736
Number on roll (school)	164	Fax number	0161 4765542
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs G Beeley-Braddock
		Headteacher	Mrs Marjorie Brown
Date of previous school inspection	29 April 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This school is smaller than average. Pupils come from a variety of social backgrounds and the proportion eligible for free school meals is average. The vast majority of pupils are White British. A very small number are of mixed heritage, but no pupil is at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. The school was designated as an Extended School in 2005 and achieved the National Healthy Schools Award and ICT (information and communication technology) Mark in 2006.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school with strengths in the good start it provides for the Reception children and the ways in which it enhances the personal well-being of all pupils. In the last year improvements have been made to pupils' welfare, linked to the school's successful pursuit of Healthy Schools Status and development of the services provided under the Extended Schools initiative. However, leadership overestimates the effectiveness of the other aspects of the school and this shows that it does not yet fully ensure that evaluation of performance is squarely based on improvements in pupils' academic achievement.

Pupils achieve satisfactorily. Children enter school with average levels of knowledge and skills for their age. They get off to a good start in Reception because their learning is lively, well organised and closely monitored. Pupils make satisfactory progress thereafter to reach broadly average standards by the end of Year 6. Boys and girls do equally well in Key Stage 1, but in Key Stage 2 boys have attained less well than girls and more able pupils have not been fully stretched. Some strategies for improving writing, increasing the engagement of older boys in their learning, developing investigative skills in science and stretching the more able are now being implemented, but have yet to impact in a sustained way on achievement. Consequently, standards, although adequate in Key Stage 2, are not yet good.

The school's curriculum is satisfactory with some good features. It supports pupils' personal development well by ensuring pupils relate well to each other as reflected in their readiness to support each other in pair and group work. Pupils are aware of how to stay safe. They have good attitudes towards health and show this through their eating habits and keen participation in a range of sporting activities. Diverse opportunities to contribute to the school community assist their growing maturity. Teachers use ICT well to make learning enjoyable. However, they do not always plan effectively to meet the needs of all, especially the more able. Children in Reception benefit from a good curriculum overall. Pupils are well cared for. They say, 'the teachers make us laugh, but help us a lot' and that they feel safe in school. Academic guidance is satisfactory, but individual target-setting and assessment practice are not yet consistent features of the work of the school. Most parents and carers give full support to the work of the school.

Overall, the school has made satisfactory improvement since its last inspection. There has been a small rise in standards in Year 2, but this is balanced by a similar drop at the end of Year 6, mainly due to some underachievement by more able pupils. This was a key issue for improvement which is only now being tackled. However, there has been a perceptible increase in the pace of change within the last year and there have been successful enhancements to pupils' personal development. Partnerships are good and improving. The school offers satisfactory value for money and now demonstrates a good capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing, mathematics and science to improve the achievement of all pupils, and especially that of boys, in Years 3 to 6.
- Ensure that work is planned effectively to meet the needs of all pupils, especially the more able.
- Extend good practice in marking and the setting of personal targets to ensure pupils know how they can improve their work in all subjects.
- Ensure that the systems for evaluating and reviewing the work of the school are rooted firmly in improvements to pupils' achievement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

On entry to Reception, children's skills and knowledge are at the levels expected nationally. They make good progress in this class because there is a good range of activities and work is well planned to meet the needs of all children. By the time pupils join Year 1, the vast majority of the children have met the expected early learning goals. Thereafter, pupils build satisfactorily on their earlier attainment, but progress is more consistent in Key Stage 1. Results at the end of Year 2 in 2006 were average in all subjects. Pupils' results at the end of Year 6 in both 2005 and 2006 were in line with national averages at Level 4, but very few pupils achieved the higher level. In 2006 girls did much better than boys. The school is aware that further improvements are needed to raise standards, for example, in writing, and by stretching the more able pupils. It has recently put in place some well-considered strategies, including booster sessions, to address these weaknesses. School data and inspection findings indicate that these are now starting to have a positive impact on standards. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress in all areas of their learning.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being are good. Pupils enjoy their school, feel part of a safe and secure community and are keen to do well. This is shown in their positive attitude to learning and their good behaviour. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also good. The spiritual and social aspects are nurtured well in assemblies in which they play a full part. Their self-esteem is also underpinned by the praise they receive for their efforts. They take part enthusiastically in a wide range of extra-curricular activities and achieve well in sport. Healthy lunch and snack time food also encourage a good awareness of healthy life choices. In lessons pupils willingly share ideas and work cooperatively together. Through the school council and in their roles as play leaders and playground buddies they develop a good sense of responsibility and consideration for each other. Attendance is satisfactory. Pupils leave school with academic skills that prepare them satisfactorily for the next stage in their learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Teachers use a good range of practical activities and the interactive whiteboards to engage pupils' interest and foster enjoyment of learning. Relationships are good and teachers use praise well to reward pupils' successes and encourage them to try hard in lessons. When teaching is good or better, the pace of lessons is brisk and pupils are very much involved in assessing their own learning. They respond well to appropriate levels of challenge in good discussion and question and answer sessions. There is scope for these elements of good practice to be shared more widely across the school. Teachers now have more extensive information on pupils' progress and plan lessons in detail, but their planning does not always meet the needs of all pupils, especially the more able, effectively. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported satisfactorily by teaching assistants to enable them to work at a pace suitable to their needs. Although pupils' work is marked regularly, and effectively in English where it is linked to individual targets, pupils do not get the same quality of clear guidance in science and the foundation subjects to help them move on faster.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum in Reception provides for all areas of learning so that children develop basic skills well. However, the outdoor play area could be used more effectively to develop imaginative play. Older pupils know how to stay safe, make healthy life choices and develop a good awareness of citizenship because these aspects are well covered in the personal, social and health education programme and reinforced effectively through a wide range of visits, including residential stays and visitors, such as the 'Theatre Bus'. Pupils use ICT well to support their learning. National guidelines are being adapted successfully, for example, through the incorporation of drama, to make learning more relevant and exciting for pupils, but there are missed opportunities for pupils to develop their extended writing skills in subjects other than English and to be stretched to the full in lessons.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall. Arrangements for safeguarding the health, safety and welfare of pupils, including child protection are in place. There is a good range of opportunities for pupils to feel valued and have their achievements recognised, which builds their confidence and self-esteem. Pupils are well cared for so that they feel happy and secure in school. It was reported, 'the teachers make us happy and we make them happy'. The school makes good efforts to involve parents and through the Extended Schools initiative is laying the foundations of wider

partnerships with them. Good links with secondary schools, including curriculum bridging units, ensure Year 6 pupils move smoothly into secondary education. Procedures and systems for tracking the progress of all pupils are acquiring greater rigour and are now being used effectively to direct intervention programmes for groups of pupils. However, these systems are not yet fully embedded in the work of the school and consequently individual target-setting and assessment do not consistently support pupils' learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Day-to-day leadership is effective in ensuring that staff and pupils work in a purposeful environment and in providing well for pupils' personal development. Leaders work energetically as a team and middle leaders receive useful training to further their professional development, but until recently this has not been tightly focused on the need to raise standards within their subjects, especially in Key Stage 2. Arrangements have been made to assess pupils more regularly and this is enabling leaders to develop a clearer idea of pupils' progress and to take effective action to support their learning. The school development plan identifies most of the key priorities for improving standards and usually provides criteria against which progress can be measured. Evaluation and review arrangements for teaching and learning are less clearly defined. The leadership team need to ensure that the monitoring of teaching and learning, including lesson observations, is rigorous and focused on the impact on pupils' achievement. Resources are being used well to boost pupils' motivation and enjoyment of school, but have yet to impact fully on achievement. The governing body is supportive, but does not provide a sharp enough challenge to school leaders.

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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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
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?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
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	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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?	3
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	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

My colleague and I visited your school this week to find out how well you are learning. Thank you for making us welcome and being helpful when we asked you questions. My colleague was especially lucky in being able to talk to you at length and was impressed by your clear enjoyment of school. We also noted your good team spirit in the way the older pupils celebrated the successes of the Reception children in their assembly.

We judge that you are receiving a satisfactory education. We agree with you that the staff look after you well. The teachers give you lots of encouragement to take part in lessons and try hard to make your learning fun. You follow the teachers' lead in being polite and considerate to others and support each other well in lessons. We were also impressed by the wide range of opportunities you have to extend your learning, for example, through drama and the 'Theatre Bus' presentations.

There are some things that we have asked the headteacher and the staff to do to make your learning better. First, we want them to give you more opportunities to develop your writing skills and ensure that you do better in mathematics, science and the other subjects. Second, we have asked them to make sure that you, and especially those pupils who learn faster, always get the type of work that will stretch you to do your best. We were impressed by the system the school has for marking your work in English, so we have asked the staff to do the same for other subjects, especially science, to help you improve. Finally, we have asked them to check carefully that the actions they take will, indeed, raise your standards.

Thank you for helping us with the inspection of your school. You can help by always doing your best and by working hard with your teachers to make St Mary's an even better place to be.