

# Wakefield St Marys Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	108269
<b>Local Authority</b>	Wakefield
<b>Inspection number</b>	288060
<b>Inspection dates</b>	9–10 May 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Clive Moss HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	175
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Janet Milne
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Susan Sansom
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	4 March 2002
<b>School address</b>	Charles Street Wakefield West Yorkshire WF1 4PE
<b>Telephone number</b>	01924 303625
<b>Fax number</b>	01924 303626

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

St Mary's is smaller than the average for primary schools. Most pupils come from an area of very high social and economic disadvantage. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is much higher than average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is much higher than average. The proportion of pupils for whom English is an additional language is extremely high: nearly five times the national average. There is a higher than average proportion of pupils with statements of special educational need. The school is experiencing significant changes in its population that are reducing levels of attainment on entry and year groups have varied significantly in size.

## 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 an effective school. It has many good features. It is particularly successful at promoting the personal development and well-being of the pupils. Pupils gain confidence and self-esteem as a result of the work of the school. Parents are very appreciative of the things the school does. Pupils' academic achievement is satisfactory. Standards are well below average. They are improving, but not consistently and, as a result, the overall improvement trend over the last five years is slow. Pupils' progress is hampered by low levels of language skills, particularly in relation to academic subjects. The good progress now being seen in lessons has not yet translated into higher standards in national tests and measures of achievement. This is partly because improvements in teaching have been relatively recent.

Pupils are proud of their school and enjoy being there. They say they feel very safe and happy at the school. Their behaviour is good. Pupils develop well socially and make a good contribution to the community. Relationships between pupils and with the staff are very good. Pupils are attentive and keen to learn. They develop a good sense of right and wrong. They learn well about leading a healthy life. Many activities help to prepare the pupils for life after school, but their progress is restricted by the standards reached in national tests in English, mathematics and science, which are still well below average overall. Attendance is broadly average.

The quality of teaching and learning has improved since the last inspection as a result of effective leadership and management. It is now good. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and with English as an additional language, also make good progress in lessons, helped by the effective support they receive from teaching assistants and bilingual teachers. The school has made good progress in introducing strategies to improve teachers' use of assessment to support pupils' learning, but these are not yet used fully or consistently in all lessons.

The school has rightly placed an emphasis upon improving work in English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT), given the particular needs of the pupils in these subjects. Pupils now make good progress in these lessons. The development of the literacy and language skills needed to enable pupils to reach higher levels of academic attainment is not yet secure in all subjects of the curriculum. The broad range of curriculum activities, educational visits and extra-curricular activities capture pupils' interest and contribute to their enjoyment of school and keenness to learn.

The members of staff at the school know the children very well. The school works very well with a range of outside agencies to safeguard pupils. Pupils say they have confidence that the staff will help them with any problems. The school has improved its use of assessment data significantly since the last inspection. As a result many pupils are able to talk with confidence about their targets and their current level of achievement, but not always with precision about how they can improve. Parents are informed regularly about their children's targets and progress and encouraged to support the school in raising standards.

The headteacher is systematically improving all aspects of the work of the school based on the priorities set out under the national 'Every Child Matters' strategy. She has established a culture of improvement amongst the staff. The staff work well together as a result of the leadership provided by the headteacher and all are focussed clearly on the needs of the pupils. All areas for improvement at the last inspection have been tackled. Managers have good knowledge of the quality of different aspects of the schools' work and judge the quality accurately, based

upon thorough and comprehensive procedures for monitoring. Priorities for improvement are well-conceived, relevant to the needs of the pupils and clearly based upon evaluation of the school's progress. The school seeks the views of both parents and pupils and uses these regularly in evaluating its work and planning improvements. As a result of these factors, the school has good capacity to improve. The day-to-day management of the school is very effective and the school runs smoothly, with a calm and orderly atmosphere.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Improve the literacy and language skills that pupils need for higher academic standards in all subjects of the curriculum.
- Ensure consistently good practice in assessment to support pupils' learning in all lessons.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Pupils' skills on entry to the Foundation Stage are much lower than is typical for children of this age. Their language skills are particularly low and many lack basic social skills. They make good progress through the Foundation Stage, so that they settle quickly into Key Stage 1. Pupils then make satisfactory progress through Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. By the end of Key Stage 1 and of Key Stage 2, standards as measured by national test scores in English, mathematics and science are still well below average.

Improvements in the last two years mean that standards in mathematics in 2006 were below average. The achievement of all the different groups of pupils in the school is similar, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those with English as an additional language, although pupils from White British heritage do not achieve quite as much as their peers.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. Pupils eat healthily in school and many join after-school sports clubs. The school has achieved the Healthy Schools standard. Positive approaches by the staff to managing behaviour lead to very good relationships with the pupils. These approaches to managing behaviour create a positive environment for learning. Pupils are encouraged to explore beliefs and feelings in a number of subjects, including music, art and personal, social, health and citizenship education. The school is successful in raising pupils' self-esteem, for example by celebrating the unique qualities of each person in song in whole school assemblies. Pupils are provided with many opportunities to take responsibility, for example, acting as 'befrienders' for pupils with difficulties or worries, 'play leaders' and school council representatives. They take these roles very seriously and speak with pride of their contribution to the school. Many pupils take part in the broad range of after school clubs and sports activities. Pupils develop a good appreciation of other cultures through various well-planned activities, for example 'Africa Week'. The school has good procedures for managing attendance and operates these rigorously. Despite these efforts, the extended absences experienced by several pupils have had a negative impact on how well they achieve.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Pupils are well behaved, attentive and keen to learn as a result of good teaching. Relationships in classrooms are good. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour very well. This leads to a positive environment for learning, which is supported by attractive displays of pupils' work throughout the school. Teachers ensure that lessons proceed at a good pace and use a variety of activities to engage and sustain the interest of pupils. The use of ICT to stimulate learning is good. The work planned by teachers provides a good level of challenge for pupils matched well to the needs of all groups of learners. As a result pupils respond well and make good progress in lessons.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good. The statutory requirements are met. There is a very good range of enrichment activities. These include clubs for cookery and chess and others which are based at the local secondary school. There are also visitors to the school such as the 'owl man' who introduces pupils to different animals and birds. Special themed weeks, such as 'European Week', enable pupils to develop an awareness of different cultures. Pupils are excited by the stimulating range of educational visits made to museums, art galleries, sculpture parks and other schools. A visit to Conisborough Castle generated a high level of interest and pupils were able to speak confidently about what they had learned. Another project provides pupils with special musical experiences. These experiences are helping to raise pupils' confidence and self-esteem. The school has begun work to increase opportunities for pupils to develop their creative and imaginative abilities, but these have not been developed fully.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 2**

Care, guidance and support are good. Child protection procedures are thorough and implemented carefully. The risks associated with activities at the school and visits are assessed carefully and appropriate actions taken. Pupils are supervised carefully throughout the day. The pupil 'befrienders' provide a very effective mechanism through which pupils are able to deal with their worries and get help. Pupils' progress is tracked frequently and the information allied to detailed knowledge of their personal circumstances to ensure that appropriate support is provided to meet their particular needs. This leads to suitable targets being set for pupils to progress. The school uses 'layered targets' to help pupils to understand what they need to do to improve their work. However, pupils are not always sufficiently clear about precisely what they need to do. The school experiences difficulty in ensuring sufficient engagement by parents in helping to improve their children's learning. The additional support provided to pupils who need it helps them integrate into lessons and the life of the school. Teachers have been allocated specific responsibilities for meeting the needs of vulnerable pupils. Pupils needing additional help receive very good support from the learning mentor, bilingual assistants and other support staff. Well managed arrangements help pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities move smoothly from the Foundation Stage into Key Stage 1 and later onto the secondary school.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. Senior leaders have a detailed picture of the performance of different groups of pupils and of the factors that account for variations. The school places considerable emphasis on the inclusion of all pupils, resulting in a harmonious community and similar levels of achievement between different groups. It has a very good understanding of how the national priorities set out under 'Every Child Matters' relate to the needs of its pupils. Achievement and standards are improving, albeit slowly. Since the last inspection, the school has successfully improved the quality of teaching, support for pupils with English as an additional language and the tracking of pupils' progress. The attention given to training and the professional development of staff has helped to improve the quality of teaching, particularly in relation to the needs of pupils with English as an additional language. This has been recognised through the achievement of the Investors in People Award. The school works very well with many external agencies and other schools. This ensures that pupils receive good support and that the school uses information about best practice in teaching and learning to improve. Creative ways have been found to improve contact with parents through community groups, such as the Asian Women's Health Group, and extended school services, including a breakfast club. As a result the extent to which parents engage with the school is increasing. Governors are supportive of the school. They carry out their functions effectively and ensure important actions proposed by the headteacher are discussed rigorously. Resources are managed well and staff deployed effectively. The school provides good value for money.

**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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**



**Annex A**

## 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>
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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
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	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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4
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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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

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

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	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

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**Annex B**

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Inspection of Wakefield St Marys Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Wakefield, WF1 4PE

Thank you for talking to me and the other inspector and making us welcome when we visited your school recently. We spoke with you in lessons, looked at your work, looked at questionnaires filled in by your parents and carers, spoke with your teachers and other members of staff, members of the school council and other groups of students, as well as some of you individually around the school. Here are our main judgements about your school, which I hope you will find interesting.

- St Mary's is an effective school. It is particularly good at helping you become confident children. Your parents and carers think highly of the school.
- The headteacher and other members of staff do a good job in running the school and making things better for you.
- You feel safe and happy at school. You know that members of staff and other pupils will help you if you have problems.
- You find lessons and the other activities at the school interesting and the school is good at changing what it does to help you learn.
- The school cares for you well. It makes sure you get good support so that you can learn.
- You make a very important contribution to the school by taking on important responsibilities. We think the 'befrienders', 'play leaders' and school council are particularly important.

The headteacher and the staff at the school have a good understanding of what needs to be done to make things even better. We think that they need to:

- help you improve the skills in English that will help you to do well in all subjects
- make sure you always know precisely how to make your work better.

I am sure you will want to do everything you can to help the staff make St Mary's an even better school.