



St Mary's CofE Primary School

Inspection Report - Amended

Unique Reference Number 109208
Local Authority Bath and North East Somerset
Inspection number 288310
Inspection date 10 January 2007
Reporting inspector David Clegg

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Lansdown View
School category	Voluntary controlled		Timsbury
Age range of pupils	4-11		Bath BA2 0JR
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01761 470245
Number on roll (school)	192	Fax number	01761 479044
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Veronica Packham
		Headteacher	Susan Heal
Date of previous school inspection	10 February 2003		

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Amended Report Addendum

Report amended due to factual inaccuracy

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is an average-sized school. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. Almost all pupils are from a White British background. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties 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: 2

'I would recommend this school as it is such a caring, happy environment for learning' was a typical endorsement of this school by one parent. It provides a good all-round education so that pupils thrive and learn. The school has made significant strides in the last two years in improving achievement and raising standards. When children enter the school they are generally attaining the expected standards. They make a good start in the Reception Year and by the time they start Year 1 many of the children have reached standards above those often found. In other year groups, pupils continue to achieve well and attain above-average standards. This success is founded on the fact that the school knows itself very well. This knowledge is gained through careful and regular checks on the quality of teaching and on pupils' progress. The information about how well pupils are doing underpins the good teaching because it enables teachers to plan successful lessons that meet the needs of all pupils. The good curriculum is kept under review and adjusted where necessary and this makes sure it consistently helps pupils to make good progress.

Pupils themselves make a significant contribution to the school's success. They are very positive about learning, thoroughly enjoy their lessons and appreciate what the school offers them. Their behaviour is excellent. Attendance is consistently above the national average. Pupils feel safe and secure because the school provides a good level of care, support and guidance. Pupils' personal development is good because the school offers them worthwhile opportunities to develop and sustain good relationships and to begin to understand the difference between right and wrong. There are, however, too limited opportunities to learn about the range of cultural backgrounds of people in Britain.

Good leadership and management have ensured that improvements are focused on improving the outcomes for pupils. The measured and well-managed approach to school improvement ensures that the recent improvements are securely based. New ideas are carefully evaluated and considered before implementation. Once in place, there is a shared determination and commitment amongst staff to make them successful. This combination assures the school's good capacity to improve even further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide more opportunities for pupils to learn about the different cultural backgrounds of the people in Britain.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils attain above-average standards and achieve well. Children make a good start in the Reception Year and by the time they start Year 1 the majority reach standards that are above those often found. The good start is built on, with good progress

sustained throughout the school. Standards have risen in the last two years, particularly in writing. This is due to the intensive attention given to improving the teaching of writing. Standards in writing are now similar to those in reading and mathematics.

All pupils do well. Those pupils with learning difficulties benefit from the help they get from teaching assistants and other adults and make progress similar to other pupils. The school ensures that those pupils who are capable of high standards also do well. In the most recent (2006) test results at the end of Year 6, over half the pupils attained above-average results.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The pupils contribute much to the life of the school. Their very positive attitudes and enjoyment of school add much to the purposeful and workmanlike atmosphere that pervades the school. Pupils feel safe and secure. They are very positive about the good relationships throughout the school; one typical comment was, 'We all get on here'. Pupils have a good grasp of what constitutes a healthy diet and know that exercise is good for them.

Pupils' social, moral and spiritual development is strong but cultural development is not quite so well developed. Pupils are not as prepared as well as they might be for life in multi-cultural Britain. Pupils have a good sense of responsibility and make a good contribution to both the school community, through school and class councils, and to the local community, through involvement in various village activities. All in all, pupils are well prepared for the future. They have the necessary academic and personal skills that equip them well for later life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The good teaching is a key ingredient in the school's success. Teachers carefully plan lessons around the needs of individual pupils. They can do this because the information they have about each individual pupil is very thorough and gives them a clear idea about what pupils need to learn next.

The well-planned lessons are taught in a lively manner that interest pupils and help them to learn as much as they can. Pupils are keenly aware that they can get help if needed. There is a good adult-pupil ratio in many lessons and this means that individual pupils get the support and guidance they need. Just occasionally, at the start of lessons, the learning assistants could have more involvement in the whole-class teaching.

Lessons make good use of the interactive whiteboards and this helps to keep pupils motivated and interested. Teachers encourage more involvement through giving pupils the chance to talk with partners about their work and ideas. This ensures that all pupils maintain good levels of concentration and actively participate in lessons.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is broad and balanced and has some innovative aspects that are helping pupils to achieve well. For example, the introduction of 'discovery time' as an opportunity for pupils to learn about things in which they are particularly interested is proving very beneficial in giving pupils a chance to apply learning skills in different contexts. Much of the work that is done, for instance, in history and geography, starts by teachers seeking out how much pupils already know and finding what they may want to research and discover more about. This successfully ensures pupils' interest and motivation. An improvement in the way writing is taught has paid dividends. There has been a determined effort to make sure that pupils have increased writing opportunities in a range of subjects so they practise and apply their skills more. The school has sought out genuine audiences for the pupils' written work. For example, pupils wrote a series of leaflets on how to take care of small animals and these are now available in the local veterinary surgery. There are good opportunities that promote pupils' personal development, although there is too limited work to introduce pupils to understanding more about the range of peoples' cultural background.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

A key feature of the school is how well teachers know pupils. The information gathered on how well pupils are doing is used well to plan successful lessons and to point pupils to what needs to be improved. The 'marking for improvement' procedures give pupils good short-term guidance that they find helpful, although younger pupils are more knowledgeable about what they had to do next than the older ones.

Procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare are secure and taken seriously. This results in pupils feeling comfortable and confident in approaching any adults if they have a problem.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school's success is underpinned by a secure knowledge about the needs of each pupil. The very good leadership of the headteacher ensures a calm and measured approach to school improvement. The school takes regular soundings on how well it is doing through checks on teaching, analysing the information about how well pupils are progressing and adjusting the curriculum to meeting changing needs. For example, in response to the high proportion of boys in the Reception Year, a range of different strategies was introduced to grab and sustain their attention when working. The school is continuing to develop the part played by all subject leaders in having a firm understanding of standards across the school and the part they can play in further improvements.

There is a strong sense of collegiality because teachers are confident that any improvements are well founded, tried and tested and strongly relate to raising achievement.

The governors are fully involved in the life of the school and fulfil their responsibilities well.

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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?	2
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

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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
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	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	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

Thank you very much for helping me to find out about your school when I visited recently. I really enjoyed my day with you. I am writing to let you know what I found out about your school. The first thing to say is that yours is a good school that is giving you a good education.

The following are the things that I found to be particularly good:

You all work hard because you enjoy learning and this helps you to do well. The quality of your work by the time you leave in Year 6 is better than in many other schools.

Teachers make sure that lessons are interesting and that the work you are given helps you to learn as much as you can.

The school takes good care of you and ensures that you are safe and secure

The school is well led and managed and everyone who works there is keen that you all do your very best.

To make things even better I have asked the school to make sure that you learn about the different backgrounds of people who live in Britain. You may like to think how you could find out about the different backgrounds when deciding what to learn about in 'Discovery Time'.

Once again, thank you for your help. I wish you all the very best in the future.