

# St Mary's CofE School, Truro

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	111990
<b>Local Authority</b>	Cornwall
<b>Inspection number</b>	289134
<b>Inspection dates</b>	11–12 July 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Pauline Robins 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 controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	196
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Peter White
<b>Headteacher</b>	D M Jones
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	24 September 2001
<b>School address</b>	Higher Trehaverne Truro TR1 3RJ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01872 276689
<b>Fax number</b>	01872 276689

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<b>Age group</b>	5–11
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## Introduction

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

## Description of the school

St Mary's is a smaller-than-average primary school for pupils aged five to eleven. It is located on the edge of Truro. Because of its denominational status, pupils travel from all over the city. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage, with three pupils who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is similar to the national average. However, at 3%, a higher proportion than average has a statement of special educational need. The headteacher took up her post in January 2006 and the deputy headteacher joined the school in September of the same year, so both are relatively new to the school.

## 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 a satisfactory school that is well placed to improve further once strategic planning has been refocused on teaching and learning. Since the headteacher arrived at the school she has concentrated on improving provision so that pupils are educated in a bright, invigorating environment. Having achieved this, both she and the deputy headteacher recognise that the need is now to achieve consistency across all areas of the school's performance.

Pupils receive a sound and well-balanced education, with good opportunities for personal development. Pupils recognise that it is a caring school and they appreciate the interest that staff take in their welfare.

Pupils will leave the school this year with levels of attainment which are above average in English and science and average in maths. Although this is an improvement on previous years, senior managers know that standards need to be improved further so that they are consistently good each year. This means that teaching, although satisfactory overall, needs to be consistently good throughout the school. Group targets are set throughout the school. However, this has achieved limited impact as the targets are not reviewed frequently enough, nor are they discussed with all pupils to enable them to understand fully what they need to do to improve.

The headteacher has successfully introduced many new initiatives, including strengthening the role of middle leaders and developing the procedures for monitoring and tracking pupils' progress. These are still developing and have yet to have a full impact on raising standards and increasing progress. The school's evaluation of its performance is accurate, however monitoring is inconsistent. The evaluation process and the systems by which the school plans future developments are not fully understood by the governing body. Thus, although committed to the school, they are unable to hold the school fully to account.

The Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall, with aspects that are good. These include the quality of teaching, planning and the deployment of adults. Assessment- on-entry procedures have recently changed in response to advice from the local authority. Consequently, data on pupils' progress is not yet firmly embedded. The Foundation Stage leader is now making good use of data to set end-of-year targets for individual pupils. Links with the main pre-school setting are strong, with opportunities for further collaboration identified. There is an appropriate range of learning experiences and opportunities, including access to a secure outdoor learning area.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Take account of the views and professional opinions of all stakeholders in drawing together the self-evaluation document; systematically incorporate this into the school's strategic planning, with an appropriate emphasis on teaching and learning.
- Extend the arrangements for pupils to talk about their targets, enabling them to participate actively in their learning, monitoring and review.
- Ensure the governing body holds the school to account more rigorously and systematically challenges it to improve further.

A small proportion of 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.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

When taken overall, children enter the Reception class with skills that are average, although this varies from year to year. Children make good progress in reading and satisfactory progress in mathematics but perform less well in writing. Progress accelerates and is good in Year 2 but remains relatively weaker in writing. Intervention strategies are in place to address this but it is too soon for them to show an impact on raising standards.

The use of data to monitor pupils' progress has only been in place for the past year. As a result, it is difficult to monitor trends over time, and the accuracy of teachers' assessments is still to be fine tuned. The progress that pupils make during Key Stage 2 is inconsistent, although satisfactory overall, reflecting the varied quality of teaching they receive. The provisional results of the national Key Stage 2 tests in 2007 show a significant improvement on previous years in both English and science. In these subjects, the school has exceeded very challenging targets for the percentage of pupils who reach the expected Level 4 and also for those who reach the higher Level 5. Mathematics is weaker, although pupils' performance is in line with that which would be expected in similar schools nationally. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make at least satisfactory progress and make good progress towards meeting the targets in their Individual Education Plans (IEPs).

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

### **Grade: 2**

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good overall. They develop a spiritual awareness and appreciation through participation in assemblies and strong links with the local church. Pupils have opportunities for reflection and expression of faith through the use of a prayer wall. The school is successful in promoting an understanding of Cornish culture and traditions. However, pupils' understanding of other faiths and cultures is at an early stage in development. The school has recognised this and recently improved resources to address this area.

Pupils form positive relationships and demonstrate a caring attitude towards each other. Year 6 pupils have an opportunity to mentor pupils in the Reception class through a 'buddy' system. Pupils' behaviour in classrooms and around the school is good.

Pupils display an enjoyment in their learning and speak positively about the school. They recognise the significant improvements that have been made in the facilities and resources for the curriculum. Attendance has improved and is now above the national average. Pupils know how to stay safe and make healthy choices. They make a positive contribution to the school and the local community through participation in a variety of festivals and projects. Opportunities for pupils to develop skills to contribute to their social and economic well-being are less developed, as is the school council. The council is currently too directed by adults and opportunities for pupils to be proactive and fully understand the democratic process are limited.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. However, practice is inconsistent and ranges from good, with outstanding features, to inadequate. The headteacher recognises where weakness exists and has in place appropriate strategies to support and challenge poor performance. Teaching is effectively monitored and the headteacher is accurate in her assessment.

The pupils told the inspection team that, 'most teachers are really nice and they make lessons interesting'. Where teaching is at its best, pupils are engaged in their learning because teachers are clear about expectations, draw on pupils' previous learning and differentiate the work to meet the needs of all. Teaching assistants are effectively deployed and work well with individuals and small groups to support learning and assess progress.

The quality of teachers' marking is inconsistent. In some classes it is informative, refers to targets and helps pupils understand the things they need to do to improve. Conversely, in some books, marking is superficial, with just a tick or a 'well done' comment. Group targets are set in literacy and numeracy and these are displayed in all classrooms. However, in some Key Stage 2 classes, there is insufficient opportunity for teachers and pupils to discuss these targets and the impact they have on the pupils' learning. As a result, too many pupils are confused about when they have achieved the target and how long they last.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

Teachers plan appropriately, identifying learning aims and activities to meet the needs of all learners. Provision for gifted and talented pupils is at an early stage of development. The recently appointed co-ordinator has identified this as an area for whole-school development. An audit has been undertaken and through the local network opportunities have been provided to extend and challenge more-able pupils in mathematics and science.

The school has good links with other agencies to support personal, social and health education. For example, a local lifeguard provides annual training in water safety. The school provides opportunities for swimming for specific age groups and aims to have every child swimming by the end of Key Stage 2. International links are established and maintained through a school and a child in Kenya. The school provides a good range of enrichment activities to extend learning through lunchtime and after-school clubs. Children appreciate these clubs and speak positively of them, with the result that take-up is good.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 3

Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported well. Adults enable pupils to be included and to access learning activities. The provision of academic guidance and support is variable. Examples of good practice include the use of marking ladders for some pupils to self-evaluate and talk about their progress. However, lesson observations and discussion with pupils show they are not always clear about their targets or the process by which they are reviewed.

Pupils report strongly that there are few incidents of bullying. Any incidents are taken seriously and dealt with very promptly. Pupils say they feel safe in school and can identify an adult they can turn to if they have a problem. Appropriate safeguarding procedures are in place and risk assessments are carried out.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The headteacher and deputy headteacher are relatively new to the school. They work well together and have plans in place which have successfully improved provision throughout the school. They recognise and acknowledge that the current strategic planning is insufficiently focused on teaching and learning. Procedures for monitoring and evaluation are in place but have yet to become consistently and accurately embedded in practice. An example of this is the recording and analysis of assessment information. The headteacher and her deputy are committed to improving the school and have the necessary capability and determination to bring about change. Middle leaders are enthusiastic and are developing their role. They feel that in the past academic year they have been given time and encouragement to 'do the job'. Action plans reflect the priorities for each subject, but it is not totally clear how the process of subject planning and whole-school planning fit together.

Governors are supportive of the school and have a monitoring process in place which includes the observation of some lessons. However, they are not adequately involved in formulating the school self-evaluation document or in developing the school improvement plan. As a result, governors are not able to hold the school to account sufficiently and support the headteacher in challenging performance.

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## 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 effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
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	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

<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	2
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>	3
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	3

<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>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	4
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

12 July 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Mary's C of E Primary School, Truro, Cornwall TR1 3RJ

Thank you so much for the very warm welcome you gave us when we visited St Mary's recently. We were sorry to miss Year 6 but we hope you had a good time on your camping trip and didn't get too wet! We particularly enjoyed talking to you about your work and the things that you do in school. We were very impressed with the mature way you answered our questions.

We think that St Mary's is a satisfactory school which is getting better all the time. Your headteacher and deputy head are making a real difference and you told us that all the staff are nice and do their best to help you. Because the work you do is interesting, you enjoy coming to school and you behave well. Although some of you make good progress in your learning, this is not the case in all classes and your headteacher is working hard with the teachers to improve this.

We have asked your headteacher, staff and governors to do three things.

- Involve as many people as possible in planning for the future of the school, and that includes the school council. Making sure that plans are focused on how well you are learning.
- Make sure that you all have the opportunity to talk to your teachers about your targets so that you are clear about what they mean, when you have achieved them and how they are helping you to improve your work.
- We want the governors to become more involved in monitoring the school's progress and to work with the staff and pupils to plan for the future.

Good luck in the future and we hope you have a good summer holiday.

Yours sincerely

Pauline Robins Her Majesty's Inspector