



# St Mary's, Prittlewell, CofE Primary School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 115145  
**Local Authority** SOUTHEND-ON-SEA  
**Inspection number** 290145  
**Inspection date** 23 November 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Ruth Frith

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Boston Avenue
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided		Southend-on-Sea
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4-11		Essex SS2 6JH
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01702 354012
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	414	<b>Fax number</b>	01702 354016
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Celia Tyler
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Frances E Neil
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 July 2002		

<b>Age group</b> 4-11	<b>Inspection date</b> 23 November 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 290145
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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

## **Description of the school**

The area in which this large school is situated is recognised as one with significant levels of deprivation. Pupils' socio-economic backgrounds vary considerably. There is an increasing number of pupils entitled to free school meals but the percentage is currently a little below average. There is also an increase in the number of pupils from minority ethnic groups approximately 13 per cent and pupils who speak English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is below average and four pupils have a statement of special educational need. The majority of new children in Reception have previously attended nursery or playschool and display a wide range of abilities. Overall, their attainment is below average when they start school and in a significant minority of cases their speech and language are poor.

## **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 many outstanding features. Staff are very successful at creating a friendly and caring environment in which all thrive. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent and pervades the whole of the school's work. Pupils' personal development is outstanding and is reflected in their exceptionally good behaviour, attitudes to learning and relationships with staff and each other. Pupils thoroughly enjoy coming to school and their attendance is consistently high. Care, guidance and support are also outstanding and comments from the pupils reflect this. For example, 'Teachers are nice and kind, they help you learn'. Pupils feel safe in school and develop confidence as they experience success.

Teaching is good and ensures that pupils make good progress and achieve well. Learning builds consistently over time so pupils usually reach above average standards. Recently, staff have focused on improving the quality of pupils' writing and some good examples can be seen in their work. However, this is not always reflected in the national assessments. For example in 2006, Year 6 pupils' writing standards were below average due, in part, to their lack of confidence when attempting the tasks. Staff are particularly successful at identifying those pupils who find learning difficult and providing effective additional support. They also ensure that more capable pupils are well challenged. Teachers have recently changed the way they set targets and tell pupils the next steps they need to take to improve their work. This new practice is not yet consistent across the school.

Quality and standards in the Foundation Stage are good. Staff help children to settle quickly in school by establishing clear procedures and making learning fun. The school's curriculum is exceptionally good as it offers a particularly wide range of interesting and stimulating activities. There is a strong focus on the creative subjects and cross-curricular work which makes the topics very enjoyable. Some outstanding work has been done with other schools and the local community.

Leadership and management are excellent and instrumental in the school achieving its aims. The headteacher's enthusiastic approach and clear vision for the school, together with very effective support from the deputy headteacher, has been influential in building a strong team with a clear sense of purpose. Staff morale is high. Staff and governors have a very clear understanding of the school and their insightful self-evaluation has helped them to reflect on what has gone well and what they need to do next. Everyone in the school is determined to achieve and maintain the highest quality of education and standards; they have made good improvements since the last inspection. There is, therefore, exceptional capacity for further improvement.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Sustain improvements in pupils' writing and increase their confidence to tackle a variety of writing tasks so that their achievements are truly reflected in national assessment results.

- Ensure that the recent improvements in setting targets for pupils are fully embedded and pupils are clear about how to improve their work.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Achievement is good and has risen in recent years. From below average starting points, children in Reception make good progress and achieve well. For the first time, staff have successfully introduced all the Reception children to school at the start of the academic year. This has helped the youngest children's learning in particular, who are now likely to reach the goals set nationally along with others in the year group. Pupils continue to achieve well so that in Year 2 their results in the 2006 national assessments were above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Results for Year 6 pupils show below average results in writing, average standards in mathematics, just above average standards in reading and above average standards in science. These results reflect a cohort with more learning and emotional needs than other year groups but pupils still made good progress and achieved well. In particular, the writing result shows a lack of pupils' confidence and application to the task set. Pupils met the school's realistic yet challenging targets. Different groups of pupils, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities, achieve well. There is evidence of good standards in other subjects such as art and pottery.

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

### **Grade: 1**

The school's strong ethos, together with support from staff, families, governors and the local community, creates an environment where pupils feel happy and do well. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and develop an excitement about learning. They arrive punctually ready to start the school day. Staff provide exceptional support for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development which results in pupils being polite and sensible around school and sensitive to the needs of others. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe and also care for other pupils. Through the work of the school council, they learn how to represent the views of others, extend their decision making skills and contribute to school improvement. Pupils develop good basic skills and learn to work well with others. This prepares them exceptionally well for their next stage of education and beyond.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good because staff have high expectations of what pupils can do and pupils respond eagerly to the challenges set for them. Interesting activities, the good use of information and communication technology and a good range of

teaching methods ensure that the work motivates pupils and makes learning interesting. As one pupil in a Year 2 art lesson stated when the class was asked to indicate whether they were enjoying the work, 'I've put two hands up because this is such fun'. Teachers are particularly good at asking questions that develop pupils' thinking, for example, by encouraging pupils to explain how they worked out an answer in mathematics. The school is not complacent and the desire to do better has led them to recently develop the way they track pupils' learning over time and set targets for improvement. Staff use this information well to improve their teaching but do not always ensure that pupils are aware of how to improve their work and reach their targets.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 1**

The school offers a broad, rich curriculum with emphasis on the expressive and creative arts. This ensures that pupils have particularly good opportunities to develop their skills in art and design, pottery, dance, drama and music. Events are arranged to encourage pupils to perform in front of an audience and develop confidence and self-esteem. The very effective personal, social, health education and citizenship programme is well integrated across many areas of the curriculum and ensures that pupils know how to keep safe and healthy because of a good understanding of aspects such as road safety and drugs awareness. After school activities support healthy lifestyles through a good range of physical activities and also help pupils to develop new interests. Special events and theme weeks place a particularly strong emphasis on subjects such as technology, science, mathematics and the performing arts. Pupils say they find these activities fun and they help them to learn. School visits and visitors add another dimension to pupils' learning, for example, in art, history, geography and science by providing a more practical, 'hands on' experience.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils feel safe in school because child protection and health and safety procedures are robust and excellent care and support is provided. Those with medical needs are particularly well cared for so they are able to participate fully in school life. The needs of pupils who find learning difficult are quickly identified and very effective help and advice is given from teachers and teaching assistants so that they progress as well as they can. Pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language do well because they feel well integrated into school life and their individual needs are well met. Pupils' academic and personal development is effectively tracked over time to ensure that they do as well as expected.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 1**

The headteacher provides excellent leadership ably supported by the deputy headteacher and senior leaders. With good backing from the governors, a recent

restructuring programme linked to the raising of standards has resulted in a very effective and knowledgeable senior leadership team. There are particularly good systems for checking how well the school is doing and what needs to be improved. This has led, for example, to the introduction of a new system for recording pupils' progress and setting their learning targets. Management systems are very effective and ensure a continuous cycle of improvement. Actions by the school are well targeted and link well with the overall plan for school development. Financial management and control are excellent and the school provides excellent value for money. The Grants and Appeals Officer plays a unique role in gaining additional funds which enrich all areas of the curriculum and support individual and school development. Examples include the excellent ceramics project undertaken with two other local schools and additional music sessions for young children and their parents. Governors give excellent support to the school and are very active in ensuring its continued development. They check that standards are maintained and plans are appropriate, for example, with the forthcoming alterations to the building. The school works well with parents and takes their views into account. Consequently, nearly all parents are very pleased with the work of the school.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<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>	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	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

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

<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>	1
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1

<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.

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

24 November 2006

Dear Children

St Mary's, Prittlewell, Church of England Primary School, Boston Avenue, Southend-on-Sea, Essex, SS2 6JH

Thank you for making me feel so welcome when I visited your school recently. I enjoyed talking to you and finding out about all the work you have done. I was very pleased to see that you enjoy school and find learning fun. St Mary's is a good school and many excellent things happen there. I have listed below some of the things I particularly like.

- You work very hard and achieve well.
- Your art work and pottery are very good and I was very pleased to find out that you work with other schools so well. The ceramic plaque at the entrance to the school is one of the best I have seen.
- You behave exceptionally well, look after each other and work and play together well.
- The school council works hard to make sure that any issues that are raised are treated seriously.
- I am very pleased that you come to school regularly and arrive on time. Well done! This means that you make the most of the school day.
- The activities you do are very interesting and this makes learning fun.
- All the staff work together very well as a team and they enjoy teaching you. Teaching is good and helps to keep you interested in learning.
- Staff look after you very well and you feel safe in school. I was pleased to hear that you would go to a member of staff if you had problems.

You have an excellent headteacher who manages the school very well. She is helped a lot by all staff and governors. We have agreed that your learning will get even better if they help you more with your writing and make sure that you always know what to do next to improve your work. I left the school feeling very confident that it would continue to improve and wish you well in the future.

Ruth Frith Lead inspector