



# St Mary's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 116343  
**Local Authority** Southampton  
**Inspection number** 290508  
**Inspection dates** 9–10 November 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Janet Sinclair

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 address</b>	Ascupart Street
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled		Southampton
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11		SO14 1LU
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	02380 223930
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	411	<b>Fax number</b>	02380 224605
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mr Phil Hand
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Ms Charlotte Brown
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	25 February 2002		

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This large school serves a very deprived community. Attainment on entry is low. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is much higher than average. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties is above the national average. A large number of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds and a high proportion of these pupils are at an early stage of learning English. Twenty-four different languages are represented within the school. There is a great deal of pupil mobility so that approximately half of the pupils who start in Year 1 leave before Year 6. The school appointed five new teachers in September 2005, all of whom were newly qualified.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13(3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it reasonably is expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to pupils' standards and achievement.

The school's effectiveness is inadequate. There is now a stable staff and some recent improvements have been made. Standards are lower than they should be in English, mathematics and science. Achievement is inadequate except in the Foundation Stage where children achieve satisfactorily. However, there is an improving picture. Progress across the school, although still unsatisfactory, is gradually improving. The school's efforts to raise standards in reading are a recent success. Weaknesses in teaching and behaviour, which resulted in the inadequate achievement, are now being addressed. Teaching and learning are inadequate. Although teaching is improving, due to the school's recent efforts, it is not yet good enough to make up for past underachievement, especially as teachers still do not always provide work which is well matched to the learning needs of the diverse groups within the school.

Personal development is satisfactory. Relationships are good. The school has worked hard to improve behaviour which is now satisfactory and pupils enjoy coming to school. However, in spite of the school's strenuous efforts, attendance is much too low. Pastoral care is good and, as a result, pupils feel safe and secure. Academic guidance is satisfactory. The school satisfactorily tracks pupils' progress and provides additional support where needed. There is satisfactory assessment and target setting in writing but they are not used consistently enough to secure real improvement in pupils' work. Pupils are not involved enough in their own learning. The curriculum is satisfactory. Parents are pleased that their children enjoy school.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school has benefited from an intensive support programme resulting in improvements in reading, the Foundation Stage and behaviour. The school has a satisfactory capacity to improve. Senior leaders now have a shared vision for improving standards across the school and have clear action plans. However, the pace of change they have set is not fast enough to bring about the rapid improvement required to address the backlog of underachievement in the school. Sometimes agreed actions are not monitored effectively enough to ensure they are consistently implemented by all staff.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and improve achievement in English, mathematics and science.
- Improve the quality of teaching, ensuring that lesson activities are matched closely to the needs of all pupils so that they are always challenged to do their best.
- Increase the pace of change in order to bring about more rapid improvement.
- Improve attendance by ensuring that all parents are clear about the impact that absence from school has on their child's progress.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 4**

Standards are low and achievement is inadequate in Years 1 to 6. However, pupils' rate of progress is increasing due to better teaching and a clearer focus on raising standards. Children start in the Nursery with low levels of attainment. They make satisfactory progress during their time in the Foundation Stage and in physical and personal, social and emotional development their progress is good. However, on leaving the Reception year, the majority are working at levels which are lower than those expected for their age in most areas of learning.

The national test results in 2005 and inspection evidence for 2006, at the end of Years 2 and 6, show standards which are exceptionally low across all subjects. Pupils have not made sufficient progress. In the last year there has been some improvement in pupils' rate of progress which has stopped the decline in standards. This is due to improved teaching and more focused leadership. Nevertheless, writing and mathematics are particularly weak and progress in them is unsatisfactory. These are the next areas of focus for improvement. Pupils' learning in lessons is improving as the school is developing strategies to improve provision, for example, through its successful focus on guided reading and monitoring of teachers new to the school. It has been helped by its involvement in the intensifying support programme. The school failed to meet its own targets for results in 2006 partly as a result of the high turnover of pupils. Pupils with learning difficulties and those with English as an additional language make satisfactory progress when given focused work in small groups; otherwise their progress is unsatisfactory. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys or girls over time.

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

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils' personal development and well being are satisfactory. Pupils enjoy school and get on well with each other. The focused work on behaviour management is having a positive impact on pupils' behaviour which is satisfactory throughout the school. Relationships are positive and as one pupil said, 'There are different types of pupils here and we all get on very well'. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Through carefully planned assemblies and celebrations of different events, pupils show a good understanding of their own culture and are learning to respect others. Despite the school's best efforts to raise the attendance level, it is still exceptionally low. Pupils show a good understanding of how to stay safe and know who to approach for help. Although there is some bullying, it is dealt with promptly by staff. Pupils are clear about the importance of a good diet, including plenty of fruit and vegetables, and regular exercise to keep themselves healthy. The school council is very active and its actions have helped to improve the playground. Pupils make a positive contribution to the community through various fund raising activities and their involvement in specific projects such as improving the local environment. Examples such as selling fruit at lunch times and getting involved in costing and editing a

magazine are helpful in developing pupils' economic well-being, but their low achievement in literacy and numeracy hamper their preparations for the future.

In the Foundation Stage there is a strong emphasis on personal development and pupils are happy and confident to choose what they want to do while showing a growing understanding of what is expected of them.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 4**

There has not been enough good teaching in the past, and this has led to pupils' unsatisfactory progress. Most of the lessons seen during the inspection were satisfactory but pupils' low achievement in the national tests and work in their books confirm that too much inadequate teaching remains. Teaching is improving and this is beginning to show in the way that pupils' progress is starting to accelerate but there is still not enough good teaching to make sure pupils catch up. Additionally, there are aspects of teaching that are constraining progress. As a whole, teachers do not plan well enough for the wide range of pupils' needs nor do they ensure that questioning sufficiently challenges all groups.

In the Foundation Stage, teaching is well planned to meet children's needs enabling them to become confident learners. However, there are occasional unsatisfactory aspects such as low level interactions between teacher and children that hamper progress.

The school has undertaken a great deal of work to improve guided reading and the success of this was seen in Year 1, with good resources for the re-enactment of a story and effective questioning to develop understanding. Teachers have good relationships and mainly manage pupils well in lessons, but occasionally, when whole class introductions are overlong pupils' behaviour deteriorates. They make good use of whiteboards which help to engage pupils' interest. Occasionally, when teaching is inadequate there is ineffective support and challenge so pupils lose concentration. Teaching assistants provide good support in lessons but are not always given sufficient guidance. Teaching of pupils with learning difficulties and those for whom English is an additional language is good when it is focused, small group work. However, in class lessons it is not always satisfactory and this is because work is too difficult or teachers lack the necessary skills and strategies to support the pupils effectively. Marking often tells pupils what they do well or need to improve but there is limited evidence of pupils' responding to suggestions.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum is satisfactory and there is a good programme of visits including an annual residential visit. There are popular clubs such as computer, choir and for French which develop pupils' skills and self-confidence. The provision for information and

communication technology (ICT) is now satisfactory and has greatly improved since the last inspection with a computer suite and whiteboards in all classes. Teachers take account of the range of levels of achievement of all pupils including those with learning difficulties and disabilities when planning across year groups. However, they do not do this as effectively when planning class lessons. In lessons, written materials are often set at too high a reading level, which makes them difficult for some pupils to understand. There is a suitable programme of personal, social and health education, including teaching about sex and drugs. Healthy lifestyles are promoted well through the science curriculum and the provision of fruit at break times.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

The care, guidance and support pupils receive are satisfactory. The care and welfare of pupils are strengths. Procedures to protect them are secure and child protection procedures are fully in place. The breakfast club, the work with Sure Start and other agencies are effective in involving and supporting both parents and their children. They have a positive impact on pupils' capacity to learn and their self-confidence. The good induction arrangements and support for new arrivals are helpful in settling pupils well into the life of the school.

The school tracks pupils' progress satisfactorily and uses the information to identify pupils who need additional support. Termly writing assessments are evaluated conscientiously by the school and used to set targets for improvement. However, the monitoring of targets lacks rigour and they are not consistently implemented across the school.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. Despite the high level of turbulence and the many changes to staff, there is a warm welcoming atmosphere. Lots of smiling faces on both adults and pupils indicate that they are happy to attend. The headteacher and deputy work well together and recent actions to improve reading, the Foundation Stage and behaviour are beginning to bring some success. They have evaluated the impact of decisions and put in satisfactory action plans such as those to support new subject leaders. Regular evaluation of the school's efforts in improvement clearly show some success in raising the quality of writing through greater use of drama. Pupils across the school are beginning to make better progress, although overall progress remains unsatisfactory. Last year there was a well managed programme of support for the large number of newly qualified teachers ensuring that they are competent teachers and confident enough to take on their roles as subject leaders. These positive steps indicate that the school has satisfactory capacity to bring about further improvement.

Senior management share a vision of raising standards and quality. They have successfully minimised exclusions and improved behaviour, which has created a

better learning environment. They have improved standards and provision in the Foundation Stage and reading across the school. Some subject leaders are new to their roles so have not yet had an impact on provision. The pace of change set by the school, however, is not fast enough to bring about the rapid improvement required. Some actions also lack the necessary rigour. Although teaching has been regularly monitored, there remain weaknesses which affect pupils' learning and achievement. Governors are active in their support for the school and aware of the need to raise standards. Since the last inspection ICT facilities have greatly improved and resources such as the interactive whiteboards are used effectively to support pupils' learning. Parents are supportive of the school and appreciate the regular consultations and reading workshops.



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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>	4
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
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>	4
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	4

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The behaviour of learners	3
The attendance of learners	4
How well learners enjoy their education	3
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>	4
<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.

## 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	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	4
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?	Yes

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

Thank you for being so friendly and helpful when we visited your school. We found that your school cares well for you although it needs to make sure you all know your targets and are clear about how to improve your work. We know that you like your school and feel happy and safe. Your personal development is satisfactory and you know how to keep fit and eat well. We liked your involvement in the school council which gives you a say in the work of the school. The curriculum includes all the things you need to learn as well as clubs and visits that I know you enjoy.

Your school is not yet as good as it needs to be and we have given it a Notice to Improve which means more inspectors will visit the school soon. The school's test results in English, mathematics and science are not high enough and you need much more help from teaching staff so that you make better progress.

What your school needs to do now:

- help you to do much better in English, mathematics and science
- make sure that the work you get is at the right level and that teachers carefully monitor how well you are doing in case you need extra help or extension work
- the headteacher and teachers need to ensure that the school improves more quickly
- improve your attendance, by making sure your parents understand how important it is for you to be in school - you could help by making sure that you attend school every day.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Janet Sinclair

Lead inspector