

# St Mary's Church of England Primary School, Hinckley

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	120134
<b>Local Authority</b>	Leicestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	291643
<b>Inspection dates</b>	3–4 July 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	George Logan

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>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	302
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	David Thorpe
<b>Headteacher</b>	Carole Cooper
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7 March 2005
<b>School address</b>	Station Road Hinckley LE10 1AW
<b>Telephone number</b>	01455 637477
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The school, located in Hinckley town centre, is slightly larger average and serves a socially mixed community. The proportion of pupils identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities has increased in the current year and is around the national average. The great majority of pupils come from White British backgrounds. Five pupils are learning English as an additional language. Following an inspection in March 2005, the school was judged to have serious weaknesses. The current headteacher joined the school in April 2005.

## 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 which has improved rapidly under the highly effective leadership of the current headteacher. Faced with the challenge of putting right the weaknesses identified at the last inspection, she has given the school a clear direction and a new sense of purpose.

Leadership and management as a whole are satisfactory, because not all of those with leadership responsibilities are yet fully effective in their roles. However, the fundamental weaknesses in leadership and management have been rectified. The leadership team has a very clear overview and a strong commitment to improvement. Data systems are robust and used well. Strategic planning is effective. Subject leaders have a better awareness of provision and standards, while planned opportunities to evaluate teaching will enable them to extend their skills further. Governors now have more involvement in monitoring the school's work.

Although teaching and learning remain satisfactory overall, there is a significant amount of good and outstanding practice. Effective professional development is enhancing teachers' skills and there are signs that this is having a positive impact on pupils' progress. Teachers' expectations have risen and the pace of lessons is brisker, providing more challenge for pupils. Pupils are enthusiastic. Relationships are good and pupils are now managed well. Support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, previously unsatisfactory, has improved considerably, enabling these pupils to progress at least as well as the others. Overall, teachers' use of assessment is more effective. However, there are inconsistencies in the use of individual pupil targets and some teachers' marking does not always provide enough information as to how pupils can improve their work.

Since the last inspection the school has refocused its curriculum priorities and the curriculum is now satisfactory. Rather than a narrow concentration on basic skills and test performance, pupils now have a richer and more balanced experience and this makes an increasing contribution to their satisfactory achievement, good personal development and enjoyment. Children make satisfactory progress in their Reception year to reach the expected levels by Year 1. Standards are broadly average in both Year 2 and Year 6, with pupils doing less well in mathematics than in other subjects. The school recognises that there is insufficient structured support for academically gifted pupils, however, most higher attainers are making good progress.

Overall care, guidance and support for pupils are satisfactory. Pastoral care is good and pupils are cared for well and feel very safe. However, in some years, academic guidance is inconsistent. Although some parents feel that their views do not always carry weight, most recognise the school's strengths. One said that placing her child in St Mary's was 'one of the best decisions we have ever made'.

Staff increasingly share the headteacher's focus on raising achievement. Rigorous checking of performance ensures that the school has an accurate picture of its strengths and areas for development. Past weaknesses have been tackled resolutely and the good progress made shows that the school has good capacity for further improvement. In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' achievement across the school, particularly in mathematics and for pupils identified as academically gifted.

- Ensure that the proportion of good or outstanding teaching continues to increase, and that the marking of pupils' work is more thorough and more consistently aligned to pupils' personal targets for improvement.
- Develop further opportunities for middle managers to extend their skills in the evaluation of teaching and learning.

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**

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and pupils reach broadly average standards. The last inspection indicated that above average standards by the end of Year 6 reflected a narrow focus upon basic skills and test preparation. The school has responded effectively to these criticisms. While standards are marginally lower than when the school was last inspected, pupils now have a significantly richer learning experience.

With more consistently satisfactory and good teaching pupils' progress is improving. Better deployment of support staff, rigorous tracking and a sharper focus on the progress of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are enabling these pupils to progress as least as well as the others. However, some academically gifted pupils do not always make the progress that they should.

Children's progress in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. From broadly average standards on entry, most now reach or exceed the expected levels by the end of Reception. Broadly average standards have been sustained at the end of Year 2, although there is a slight decline in writing in 2007. At the end of Year 6, standards are also broadly average. Science is a strength, while standards in mathematics are the least robust.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' enthusiasm for school is evident in their positive attitudes, good behaviour, willingness to take on responsibility and their active support for the activities offered. Attendance is average and the school tackles non-attendance robustly. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Assemblies provide good opportunities for reflection and spiritual awareness is promoted well through the curriculum. Personal and social programmes contribute strongly to the development of social and moral awareness. However, pupils' recognition of other world cultures is underdeveloped. As a result, they are not as well prepared for their future life as they could be.

Relationships between all members of the school community are good. The rare instances of bullying are dealt with quickly and there have been very few exclusions for poor behaviour. Pupils feel safe, confident that concerns will be dealt with promptly. They are also aware of the need to act safely and are careful with tools, such as scissors. They recognise the importance of a healthy lifestyle. Many take part in the physical activities on offer. Pupils make a good contribution to the school community. The school council is actively involved in decision making, for example about improvements to the school grounds. They enthusiastically help Reception children as 'buddies' and apply for posts around school. They help the wider community through

charitable collections. They are well prepared for the future by acquiring independent and team working skills. However, their sound basic skills mean that their readiness for the next stage of learning is satisfactory overall.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Considerable effort has gone into tackling the weaknesses in teaching and learning identified in 2005. Staff changes, rigorous action to deal with poor practice, good professional development opportunities, together with comprehensive assessment and target-setting structures, have helped to refocus teachers' attention on the progress which pupils make. Although teaching and learning remain satisfactory, there is a significant amount of good and outstanding practice. The pace and challenge of lessons have improved. This is just beginning to impact on pupils' progress. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported by effective teaching assistants.

Good relationships, effective management of behaviour and teachers' good subject knowledge have a positive effect on pupils' learning. The teaching teams, organised in two-year groups, encourage the sharing of good practice, consistency of provision and raised expectations. However, while systems for individual target-setting exist, there are inconsistencies in how this operates between classes. Marking varies in rigour and does not always provide pupils with the guidance necessary to improve their work.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

Since the previous inspection the curriculum has improved and is now broader and more balanced. Good planning for the development of basic skills is balanced by an increased emphasis upon other subjects. The school is developing more creative links between subjects. More use of 'topic' work is encouraging greater engagement by pupils and the school is closely monitoring the impact of this on achievement. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities has improved. Teachers now plan more effectively for individual needs. Support for pupils identified as gifted or talented is not yet sufficiently systematic. The Foundation Stage curriculum is satisfactory, although space constraints limit opportunities for outdoor play. The curriculum provides few opportunities for pupils to learn about a diversity of cultures. Extra-curricular provision is good and is well supported. The wide range of sporting and cultural activities and visits provides good opportunities for pupils to excel, so enhancing their personal development.

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

#### **Grade: 3**

Pastoral care is good. Teachers and other adults promote pupils' health and safety well. Assemblies encourage a good sense of community awareness. Supervision is effective and pupils feel there is always an adult to keep an eye on them. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are secure. The school has good links with external agencies, so ensuring that pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are effectively supported. All pupils' progress is tracked well. Academic guidance is satisfactory. Older pupils generally know at what levels they are working and have targets for improvement. However, there is inconsistency in the

implementation and monitoring of targets and pupils do not receive consistently clear information through marking as to what is needed to reach higher standards. Consequently, targets have less impact on pupils' progress than they might have.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Leadership and management are satisfactory. However, the headteacher provides strong leadership and, ably supported by the deputy headteacher and the newly established leadership team, has implemented many changes which have directly improved pupils' opportunities. The headteacher has an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and past weaknesses have been largely resolved. Data analysis has improved significantly, as has provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school now has a clear strategic direction.

Day-to-day management is efficient. Performance management systems are effective. There is a consistent approach to planning, teaching and learning. The governors' role has developed satisfactorily and they are increasingly ready to hold the school to account.

The role of middle managers is less developed. Although they see recorded work, they have few opportunities to monitor teaching. The headteacher plans to delegate such responsibilities to middle managers in order to develop their skills.

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## Annex A

## 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>	3
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	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	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	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>	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	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	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

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Mary's CE Primary School, Hinckley, LE10 1AW

Thank you for making us welcome when we visited your school and for being so interested in what we were doing. We were impressed by your politeness and by how hard you work. We enjoyed the discussions we had with you. We know that you are proud of the experiences you have at school. We found that St Mary's CE Primary is a satisfactory school. It has made good progress in the last couple of years.

These are the things we most liked about your school.

- You are well behaved and polite. You work hard, enjoy school and attend as much as you can. Your teachers look after you well and give you satisfactory guidance about how you can improve your work.
- The teaching is satisfactory, often better. As a result, most of you make steady progress in lessons and are doing as well as most other children of your age.
- The curriculum is quite well organised and you support the after-school clubs and activities very well.
- The headteacher leads the staff well and the way the school is managed by them all is satisfactory.

We have asked staff to make some changes to help the school become even better.

- Make sure that the pace of learning is good right across the school, especially in mathematics where some of you have not been doing so well.
- Help teachers to support you even more by marking written work carefully so that you know exactly how well you have done and what you need to do next. This information can then be linked to your targets.
- Give the subject leaders more opportunities to see other teachers' work.

You can all help too by continuing to work hard and do your best. We wish you all success in the future.

Yours faithfully

George Logan Lead Inspector