



# St Mary Magdalene CofE (VA) Primary School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 122775  
**Local Authority** NOTTINGHAMSHIRE  
**Inspection number** 292507  
**Inspection date** 12 March 2007  
**Reporting inspector** Joanne Harvey

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>	Springwood View Close
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided		Sutton-in-ashfield
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11		Nottinghamshire NG17 2HR
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01623 464246
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	210	<b>Fax number</b>	01623 464245
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Margaret Williamson
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Chris Johnston
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	21 October 2002		

<b>Age group</b>	<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>Inspection number</b>
4–11	12 March 2007	292507

---

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector in one day.

## Description of the school

This is a popular school of about average size. Pupils come here from a wide area. Almost all are of White British heritage and none are at the early stages of learning English as an additional language. Pupils enter the school with broadly average levels of knowledge and skills but they are particularly low in some aspects of English and mathematics. A very small minority are entitled to claim free school meals. Slightly less than average have learning difficulties or disabilities and there are currently no pupils with a statement of special educational need. A significant minority of pupils attend the school from disadvantaged social and economic backgrounds. The school has achieved an 'ActiveMark' for sport.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

This is an outstanding and highly effective school giving excellent value for money. It was considered to be a good school at the time of the last inspection and it has continued to flourish and develop since then. The school's success arises from vigorous and highly effective leadership by an outstanding headteacher, supported by his governors and an able and hardworking staff team. Together, they ensure that the needs of pupils are at the centre of all that they do. It is absolutely clear that, as they state; 'To this school, every child does matter!' Each individual is valued in this nurturing but challenging environment where the commitment to a strong Christian ethos underpins the drive for academic and personal excellence. Therefore, pupils here thrive and become very well rounded individuals. They progress rapidly, often from low starting points, to reach and generally surpass the standards expected for their age.

This is certainly a very happy and harmonious school where pupils' personal development is outstanding. Because pupils are encouraged to express their opinions and to accept increasing responsibilities, they grow in confidence and maturity, often beyond their years. This equips pupils exceptionally well for the next stage of their education and the choices they will have to make about their lives. It is no surprise therefore that the vast majority of parents and pupils give full praise for the school. One parent wrote: 'It is a privilege to have my child in such a well run and maintained school, which also provides a caring, warm and happy environment, providing a high level of learning at all stages of a child's education'.

Excellent teaching, based on very positive relationships and a greatly enriched and outstanding curriculum ensures that pupils develop extremely positive attitudes to learning. They enjoy stimulating activities which involve them in their own learning and bring lessons alive. Teachers conscientiously plan lessons to take pupils' learning forward from whatever level they have reached previously. However, occasionally, teachers do not make absolutely clear to pupils what they want them to learn and this slows progress. Those who find learning difficult get effective support so that they make extremely good progress.

Leadership and management is outstanding because the headteacher and staff tirelessly employ rigorous procedures for checking the work of the school and how well pupils are progressing. He ensures a shared understanding of the school's performance and a commitment to continuous improvement from all staff so that good as the school is, there is no complacency. The governors are extremely supportive but recent changes in membership means that too many of them are not yet able to fully carry out their role in monitoring the work of the school and in school improvement. The success the school has had in the past and its determination to do even better means that the capacity for sustained and future improvement is great.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that teachers make clear to pupils what they want them to learn.

- Ensure that all governors are taking a full role in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school and in carrying forward school improvement.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils achieve exceptionally well. When they start school, they have broadly similar levels of knowledge, skills and understanding to most pupils of their age in most areas. Aspects of their English and mathematics skills are particularly low. Pupils make good progress in the Reception class and, by the time they leave the Foundation Stage, they have achieved the standards expected of them and some have surpassed them. Standards in the teacher assessed tests at the end of Year 2 have been rising steadily over recent years, and for some time they have been exceptionally high. Though there was a dip in performance in 2006, evidence at the time of the inspection suggests that standards are currently very high again and that pupils are making extremely good progress in Years 1 and 2. This positive picture is repeated in the national tests at the end of Year 6 where exceptionally high standards are now being sustained. Evidence at the time of the inspection confirms that pupils make excellent progress from Years 3 to 6 but that their progress particularly accelerates in the later years. Pupils who have a learning difficulty or disability make similar progress to their peers.

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

### **Grade: 1**

Personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. Pupils' happiness and enjoyment is in no doubt. When asked about what they liked at school, pupils insisted that everything they do is fun. It is no surprise therefore that they attend well. Their positive attitude begins from the moment they start school. Throughout school, the utmost care is taken to help pupils think positively about themselves and others within and beyond the school community. As a result, pupils show respect for themselves and for others. They say that they enjoy the growing number of opportunities they get to help make a difference to others. One pupil volunteered 'We give back the respect that the teachers show to us'. They learn to cope with their emotions and develop an excellent sense of right and wrong. Playtimes and lunchtimes are active and joyful. Pupils develop an excellent understanding of healthy lifestyles and how to keep safe.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 1**

The impact of teaching is outstanding. Excellent relationships underpin a supportive yet challenging learning environment. Adults have high expectations of pupils so that they are attentive, rarely passive and respond quickly to instructions. Stimulating

lessons contribute significantly to pupils making excellent progress. Teachers understand that pupils learn in different ways and provide a variety of tasks which motivate and encourage them. This includes good use of computer based learning. The pupils enjoy investigating and solving problems for themselves. Adults' incisive questioning challenges them to really think and work hard. Assessment information is used effectively to plan work that challenges pupils of all abilities, though occasionally, when teachers are not absolutely clear about what they want pupils to learn, pupil progress slows. An able teaching assistant works closely with teachers to very effectively support those pupils who have additional learning needs; as a result, these pupils make excellent progress.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 1**

The curriculum is outstanding. Great care has been taken to plan a curriculum which is delivered through a 'focussed study' each half term. These link subjects to bring learning alive for pupils. They provide many memorable experiences which pupils say bring a 'wow factor' to their time at school. Pupils are presented with a beguiling range of well resourced activities which stimulate and promote pupils learning. The sense of awe and wonder inspired adds considerably to their outstanding personal development. Their personal, social and health education is extremely well provided for, much of which is implicit in the school's strong Christian ethos or taught through other subjects. The curriculum is well enriched by a range visits out and visitors to school. Good use is made of the local environment. Visitors to the school add creative arts experiences. These activities support learning in all areas of the curriculum, help children discover their talents and develop important personal skills which will help them when they are older.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

Standards of care are outstanding. The headteacher and staff believe passionately in providing not only the best academic opportunities but the very best pastoral care to promote pupils' personal development, all effectively underpinned by the strong Christian ethos of the school. Staff get to know children and families well and are extremely quick to respond to any worries. Great emphasis is placed on the personal, social and emotional development of each pupil. Therefore pupils settle in to school life very quickly and easily. Pupils who have learning difficulties and disabilities are very well supported and do extremely well. Child protection and safeguarding arrangements are very thorough. Systems for measuring how well children are progressing are extremely rigorous. Teachers know exactly what the next stages of learning are and plan to meet their needs accordingly.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 1**

Leadership and management are outstanding. There is a proven track record of maintaining very high standards whilst continuing to make improvements. That this has recently been achieved against a background of a rapidly changing staff gives every confidence that the school can develop still further from here. The headteacher, supported by his able deputy provides an outstanding role model for all members of the school community. He has created a hardworking team who are united in their aim to provide the highest quality education in an atmosphere where everyone feels happy, valued, cared for and respected and teamwork is paramount. Curriculum leaders share a thorough understanding of the schools' strengths and areas for development, and everyone plays their part in driving forward improvements. Excellent systems collect detailed information about how well all pupils are doing. Therefore, resources are well focussed and response to changing needs is quick. A core of very supportive governors share a clear understanding of the school's work but too many are new and are not yet able to carry out the full range of their responsibilities.





## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
---	-----------------------

### 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>	1
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>	1
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

### 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	2
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	2
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>	1
<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	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**

13 March 2007

Dear Pupils

St Mary Magdalene CofE (VA) Primary School, Springwood View Close, Sutton-in-Ashfield, Nottinghamshire NG17 2HR

Thank you for making me so welcome when I came to inspect your school recently. This letter is to tell you what I thought about your school and how it could be even better.

I think you are lucky to go to such an outstanding school where you make much better progress and reach much higher standards than most other children of the same age. You told me that teachers make learning fun and that you do exciting things in lessons. I saw some of this myself when looking around the school. You also told me that behaviour is excellent and that everyone gets on together very well. This was certainly the impression I got as I saw you working hard in classes, having lunch together quietly and sensibly and playing outside. Because the staff look after you so well you make excellent progress in your learning. You also have someone to go to if you ever get worried and upset.

To make the school even better I have asked the teachers to always make sure that they make it clear what they want you to learn. All the governors are going to play their part too in making the school as good as it can be.

I am sure Mr Johnston and the other staff will continue to work hard to make the school an exciting and interesting place for you and you can do your bit by continuing with your excellent behaviour and hard work.

Joanne Harvey

Lead Inspector