

St Mary CofE Primary School

Inspection report - amended

Unique Reference Number	123458
Local Authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	292673
Inspection dates	6-7 March 2007
Reporting inspector	Doris Bell

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	195
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sham Bandali
Headteacher	Hazel Hemsley
Date of previous school inspection	9 December 2002
School address	Shaw Lane Albrighton Wolverhampton WV7 3DS
Telephone number	01902 372885
Fax number	01902 375154

Age group	4-11
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Amended Report Addendum

Report amended due to factual inaccuracy

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This popular school has doubled in size since the previous inspection. As well as serving the local area, it serves the nearby RAF base and therefore the size of year groups changes frequently as pupils come and go. Attainment on entry is as expected and an average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties. Very few pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds or are at the early stages of learning English. The school has a Sports Council Gold award, a Healthy Schools Gold award, an FA Charter Mark and an Investors in People Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The school provides a good quality of education for its pupils and some aspects of its work are outstanding. The school's own evaluation of its effectiveness is sharp and accurate. Leadership and management is good. The headteacher, supported effectively by the governors, drives an exceptionally clear educational direction. She successfully nurtures other staff in their management responsibilities and they are becoming increasingly effective in their roles. The checks made on the school's work are rigorously focused on tackling the areas identified for improvement. This has improved pupils' progress, especially in writing, but more remains to be done to bring achievement in mathematics up to that seen in English. All of this, plus the strong teamwork amongst staff and governors, gives the school good capacity for further improvement.

Pupils achieve well and standards are well above average. In English, standards are high and pupils make exceptionally good progress. In mathematics, more able pupils do not always reach the standards of which they are capable, especially in solving problems. The school is working on this. Children make good progress in the Foundation Stage. The quality of provision is good and almost all children reach the standards expected nationally at the end of their Reception Year. Teaching is consistently good throughout the school because it is clearly focused on improving learning and personal development. The curriculum is good and it supports teachers' planning well. A good start has been made on linking subjects together but these links are not used to best advantage to engender real excitement and understanding in learning, widen pupils' overall experiences, or encourage them to think for themselves.

The school provides outstanding care, guidance and support for its pupils. This contributes greatly to their excellent personal development and well-being and because of this, pupils greatly enjoy school and behave in an exemplary manner. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves safe and of what it means to follow a healthy lifestyle. They understand how to assess and improve their own work and they make an excellent contribution to the community. Pupils are well prepared for life beyond school.

What the school should do to improve further

- In mathematics, give more able pupils greater and more exciting challenges to help them develop the capacity to solve more complex problems.
- Maximise the links between subjects to increase pupils' understanding and enjoyment of their learning by widening their experiences and extending their ability to think for themselves.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

While children start school with attainment that, overall, is as expected for their age, they have some weaknesses in personal, social and emotional development and in aspects of language and mathematical development. Because the Reception teachers address these weaknesses well, children make good progress. Almost all reach the nationally expected levels by the end of their Reception Year.

Achievement is good in the rest of the school. Pupils with learning difficulties also make good progress, often reaching the nationally expected standards by Year 6. In Year 6, standards are well above average. They are high in English and pupils make exceptionally good progress in

this subject. Standards, which have been significantly above average since the previous inspection, have improved year by year.

The school exceeded the ambitious targets it set for 2006 despite the high level of mobility in that Year 6 age group. Standards in Year 2 were average in 2006. Progress up to Year 2, whilst overall satisfactory, was affected by some instability in staffing. This has been resolved and pupils currently in that year group are now making good progress. More able pupils do not always do well enough in mathematics in Year 2 or Year 6. The school has started to tackle this but pupils lack sufficient opportunities to build their understanding of how to solve complex problems in different ways.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils greatly enjoy school and attendance is above average. They are keen to learn and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is outstanding. Relationships are good throughout the school. Pupils feel safe and secure within the friendly well-ordered community. They know how to keep themselves safe in and out of school. Their behaviour is exemplary. Pupils have a really good understanding of the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle. This is evident when they discuss ways in which to eat healthily and in their high levels of participation in sports activities.

Pupils value and readily accept responsibility, for example as active school councillors, monitors and playtime helpers. They know that their views are taken seriously and are particularly proud of their influence on the school's decisions on recycling, improving outdoor play facilities and the decoration of the school. These activities, their involvement with the church and their support for various charities contribute to the excellent contribution they make to the school and wider community. Overall, pupils are well prepared for their future and are beginning to understand the responsibilities it entails.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers have a good awareness of their pupils' backgrounds, capabilities and progress. This is because they assess pupils' learning and personal development accurately and check their progress well in class and at regular intervals throughout the year. As a result, group and individual work is usually matched well to pupils' different stages of learning. This has contributed to the improvements in writing and to pupils' overall progress, including in the Foundation Stage. Well-briefed teaching assistants contribute effectively to pupils' progress and in particular to the good progress made by pupils with learning difficulties.

In their planning, teachers clearly identify links between different subjects. They mostly use this knowledge well to help pupils consolidate and extend their skills by using them in different situations. This is not always the case in mathematics. Here, activities too often involve additional practice of the same thing, with few exciting opportunities for pupils to consolidate their mathematical understanding by solving increasingly complex problems. The school is working on this but the current lack of such opportunities limits in particular the progress of more able pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Overall, the curriculum is well planned to meet pupils' different learning needs, including for those with learning difficulties. However, more remains to be done to promote consistently good progress amongst more able pupils in mathematics. The school is working hard to strengthen links between subjects. However, curricular planning does not yet show what parts of each subject are being covered, or which skills are to be learned, as these links are made. The school is therefore not capitalising fully on the potential such links have to broaden pupils' learning experiences and encourage them to think and learn for themselves.

A very good range of additional activities, visits and visitors successfully extend and enrich the curriculum, contributing effectively to pupils' learning and personal development. External specialist coaches and good links with a local secondary school and the RAF base make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning in art, music and sport.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school is highly successful at enabling pupils to become mature and caring young people able to care for and help others, solve disputes, overcome failures and celebrate success. These are important aspects of its ethos. Alongside the good links it has with parents and external agencies, they contribute greatly to pupils' excellent personal development and well-being. Pupils work and play in a very supportive learning environment in which there is a high level of commitment to their safety and well-being. Bullying and harassment of any sort have all but been eliminated. Pupils are very confident that any such incidents would be quickly sorted. They appreciate having targets and understanding how to improve their own work because they are closely involved in this. However, one pupil said he did not like having targets because 'they mean you have to work harder'. The vast majority of parents are rightly pleased with what the school does. Parents receive good information about the school and their children's progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher is successfully guiding the recently appointed members of the management team towards a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Together, they form an effective team. Their success in improving the quality of writing is one outcome and is an example of their having a real impact on achievement across the school. The headteacher motivates the staff well, building on their strengths, arranging professional development where appropriate and deploying them where they will have the greatest impact on pupils' learning. This includes setting up leadership teams to take responsibility for different aspects of the sharply focused school development plan.

Governors fulfil their roles well. Highly committed to further improvement, they value the headteacher's commitment and support her effectively. The checks made on the school's work by the headteacher, governors and senior staff are rigorous, accurate, comprehensive and wholly focused on raising achievement. Test and assessment outcomes are rigorously analysed to determine areas for improvement and the information is used effectively to improve teaching and learning. This has led to the current priority to raise the achievement of more able pupils

in mathematics and establish greater links between different subjects. Work has started on both of these, although much remains to be done.

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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	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ 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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	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	2
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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

¹ 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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you very much for welcoming us to your school and for talking to us about your work. You clearly enjoy school very much, and are very enthusiastic about your work as school councillors. You and the vast majority of your parents are right in thinking you go to a good school. There are some things the school could do to be even better. Here are some of the good things.

- You are taught well and you work really hard. You are given interesting things to learn. This helps you to make good progress overall and excellent progress in English.
- Your behaviour is excellent. This is because the school cares for, guides and supports you exceptionally well and therefore you learn how to work and behave in a very mature way, caring for and respecting adults and each other.
- You have a very good understanding of how to keep yourselves safe, fit and healthy, and you are well prepared for the time when you leave this school.
- The headteacher, senior managers and governors run the school well. They try hard to make sure your teachers do all they can to help you make good progress in your learning.

We have asked your school to help you make even better progress by:

- giving those of you who can cope with it more exciting and challenging things to do in mathematics and especially to help you to solve problems quicker and more accurately
- linking subjects together to give you even better learning experiences, to help all of you to think for yourselves, and to understand and enjoy your learning even more than you do now.

We hope that, as a result of these improvements, you will make even more progress in the future and that you will want to continue to enjoy learning throughout your lives.