

# St Mary's CofE (A) Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	124342
<b>Local Authority</b>	Staffordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	292964
<b>Inspection date</b>	14 June 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Martin James

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 aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	42
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Angela Pyatt
<b>Headteacher</b>	Veronica Brew
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	11 March 2002
<b>School address</b>	Mucklestone Market Drayton TF9 4DN
<b>Telephone number</b>	01630 672126
<b>Fax number</b>	01630 672126

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

The school is much smaller than most primary schools. All pupils are from White British backgrounds. There are no pupils currently eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is below average, and there are no pupils with a statement of special educational need. In recognition of its work, the school has received the Eco-Schools Silver Award.

At the time of the inspection there was an acting headteacher, who had been in the school since January 2007. A new headteacher has been appointed to take up the post in September 2007.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

The overall effectiveness of the school is satisfactory. It also has some areas of strength. Pupils' personal development and well-being are good, and their social skills are well developed. Pupils' behaviour is good, and they enjoy coming to school. Whilst care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall, pastoral care is good. Parents have positive views about the school, and one said, 'I feel very lucky to have such a lovely school for my children to learn and grow in.'

Pupils make satisfactory progress from Reception right through to the end of Year 6, where standards are usually broadly average, and occasionally above average, as they are at present. The school recognises that it does not yet provide enough consistent challenge for pupils, to ensure that they all do as well as possible in their work.

Teaching, learning and the curriculum are satisfactory. Teachers relate well to pupils, their subject knowledge is secure and teaching assistants are well deployed in supporting pupils with learning difficulties in particular. Lessons are well organised and resourced, but planning does not always make adequate allowance for the wide range of ages and abilities in the classes. Much well directed advice is given to pupils in class, but comments in books, and the targets provided for them, do not always give them a clear understanding of how to improve their work. Pupils benefit from a wide range of visits and clubs that enrich the curriculum, and they show a clear understanding of the importance of healthy eating, keeping safe and taking exercise.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. However, the acting headteacher is leading well. She has been most effective in identifying aspects of the school's provision that needed attention. In particular, she has helped colleagues identify and address weaknesses in the performance of pupils in Year 6, with the result that standards and achievement have improved this year. The school recognises that subject coordinators do not have enough opportunities to monitor provision for their subjects. In particular, their analysis of data is not yet sharp enough to adequately track the pupils' progress, especially in identifying possible underachievement.

All staff and governors show a commitment to improving the school. Governors are fully involved in budget setting and development planning, although they have not always held the school adequately to account for its performance, especially in relation to the progress that pupils make. However, current planning shows an improved awareness of the ways to take the school forward, new initiatives are beginning to take effect, and the school demonstrates a satisfactory capacity to improve further.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that teachers, through their planning, consistently challenge all pupils in their work, taking particular account of the different age groups in each class.
- Improve the quality of marking and target setting, so that pupils know what is expected of them to improve their work.
- Ensure that school managers provide a more rigorous approach to monitoring and evaluating pupils' achievement, to ensure that all pupils are achieving as well as they can.
- Strengthen the capacity of subject coordinators to check on and improve the overall provision in their subjects, including the progress being made by pupils.

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 standards in the current Year 6 are above average. The school has very small numbers of pupils in each year group, and their skill levels when entering the school vary. It is normally broadly as expected, although occasionally it is higher than this. During their time in Reception the children make satisfactory progress, and by the end of the year most achieve the targets set for them. They achieve well in their personal development. Pupils in Year 2 generally reach average standards, and occasionally higher standards. This also represents satisfactory achievement.

Standards in Year 6 vary from year to year, partly because of the year groups being very small. As a result, the performance of each pupil can have a very marked effect on the school's overall results. However, pupils usually make satisfactory progress from their starting points. In 2006, though, standards fell to below average overall, with a majority of pupils underachieving. The school carefully identified weaknesses in the pupils' work, for example in undertaking and understanding practical activities in science, and as a result of actions taken to address the issues, standards have significantly improved, and achievement is once again satisfactory.

The school makes satisfactory provision for pupils with learning difficulties, and this is helping them to make steady progress towards the targets set for them.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Their behaviour is good, as are their attitudes to their work. Pupils are courteous and polite, and they really enjoy school, as shown by their good attendance. Pupils feel safe in school, and they report that bullying is not a problem. Pupils make a good contribution to the community. In school they readily carry out a variety of responsibilities, and the school council has helped initiate improvements, for example to playground equipment. The school is also involved in the wider community, with, for instance, pupils from the school attending meetings of the parish council.

Pupils have a good understanding of how to live healthy lives, and they benefit from the good opportunities provided by the school for exercise. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good. However, they show a more limited awareness of the multicultural nature of society. The school successfully develops in its pupils a range of personal skills such as confidence and independence. The progress pupils usually make in literacy and numeracy provides a satisfactory preparation for their next stage of education, as well as later life.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching is satisfactory, but it also has some strengths. Teachers make pupils aware of what they are learning and why, and this helps them understand their work. Teachers' explanations and instructions are clear and informative, and they make good use of interactive whiteboards

to engage pupils' interest. Relationships throughout the school are good, and consequently pupils behave well and are keen to take an active part in the lessons. An interesting variety of tasks and activities are given to pupils. However, the work provided does not always make adequate allowance for the wide range of ages and abilities in the classes, and as a result, some of the work lacks challenge. Marking lacks consistency across the school, and although praise and encouragement are often provided, it does not always help pupils understand how they can improve their work.

Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning because they are well informed and usefully deployed, providing pupils with good support and advice.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

The satisfactory curriculum enables pupils to study a broad range of subjects and topics, and this contributes to their satisfactory progress. Links are beginning to be made between subjects when appropriate, and in particular, information and communication technology is used well. However, planning does not always make adequate allowance for the different age groups present in each class.

In the Foundation Stage there is a suitable balance between independent learning and directed tasks, and staff are currently planning to extend the use of the much improved outdoor facilities. Good attention is paid throughout the school to developing pupils' personal and social skills.

The curriculum makes a good contribution to pupils' safe and healthy lifestyles. There is a wide range of outings, residential visits and clubs, which pupils support with enthusiasm.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

Adults ensure that there is good and effective pastoral care. For example, pupils are confident they have an adult to turn to if they are worried. Child protection procedures are good, and staff are alert to signs that any pupil might be distressed. Outside agencies are used effectively to support pupils when a need is identified.

Staff ensure that pupils work in a safe, secure and clean environment. Safety checks and risk assessments are routinely carried out. Pupils are taught about the importance of healthy living, and they are regularly reminded of the need to take care, for instance when doing physical education.

Pupils have targets for improving their work in literacy and numeracy. However, these vary in quality, and discussions with pupils suggest that they are not always clear enough about what they need to do to make their work better.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The acting headteacher, effectively supported by other staff members, is successful in creating a positive and caring atmosphere, where pupils feel safe and enjoy their education. Current self-evaluation has been carried out conscientiously and accurately, and as a result the school now has a better focus on the analysis and use of data to assist school planning, monitoring and review. There is a determination among staff to raise achievement, and in particular they

recognise the need to make better use of tracking information to check on pupils' progress. Good use is made of external partners. For example, the use of sports coaches, drama teachers and special needs advisers successfully enhances the work of the school.

The fact that the school only has a small teaching staff means that they all carry a number of responsibilities. This has limited their time for monitoring standards and other aspects of provision in the subjects for which they are responsible. Plans have been produced to provide them with more opportunities to carry out these tasks, and to identify particular strengths and weaknesses. A number of development areas have already been identified, and, for example, staff are currently working to improve the quality of the targets pupils have for improving their work. As yet, however, these initiatives have not been in place long enough to have had a significant impact on pupils' achievement. The school regularly obtains the views of both pupils and parents, and these are taken into account during policy reviews.

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**Annex A**

## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<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?	2
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>	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
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	2
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

St Mary's C of E (Aided) Primary School, Mucklestone, Nr. Market Drayton TF9 4DN

Thank you so much for welcoming me into your school and showing me your work. I enjoyed my visit, I enjoyed talking to you and I especially enjoyed joining you in assembly. I am writing to tell you what I found out about the school, what I think is good, and what I think needs to be made better. Overall, you are in a satisfactory school, where you are making steady progress with your work.

These things are strengths of the school.

- You all behave well and you are friendly and polite.
- The staff know you well and take good care of you.
- You are sensible and thoughtful about making decisions to improve the school.
- You enjoy the range of clubs and outings that the school provides for you.
- You know all about how important it is to eat healthy food and take exercise.

These are things the school has been asked to improve.

- Make sure you all get work that suits you and is hard enough for you.
- Provide you with clear targets and helpful comments in marking, to help you understand how to improve your work.
- Make sure the school's managers keep a close check on your progress, to ensure that you are all doing as well as you can.
- Give teachers more opportunities to check on such things as your work, and the progress you are making, in the subjects they are responsible for.

I am sure you will help your teachers by learning the targets they give you, and carefully reading the comments they put in your books.

I wish you all good luck for the future, and I hope you enjoy your summer holidays.

Best wishes Martin James Lead inspector