

# St Mary's RC Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	126482
<b>Local Authority</b>	Wiltshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	293570
<b>Inspection date</b>	13 February 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Chris Nye HMI

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	257
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Evan James
<b>Headteacher</b>	Steve Riley
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	15 April 2002
<b>School address</b>	Rowden Hill Chippenham SN15 2AH
<b>Telephone number</b>	01249 460231
<b>Fax number</b>	01249 460232

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<b>Age group</b>	4-11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the impact of assessment and target setting on achievement and standards; leadership and management at all levels; the development of the curriculum since the last inspection; and the accuracy of the school's evaluation of its own performance. Evidence was collected from: lesson observations; discussions with the headteacher, senior staff, governors, pupils and parents; and the scrutiny of pupils' work, assessment data, planning and other documents. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as provided in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

The school is of average size and serves a wide geographical area. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage and come from mixed social and economic backgrounds. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average, although the number with a statement of special educational need is average. Although children enter the Reception class with a wide range of individual abilities and skills, their collective attainment on entry is broadly at the level expected. The school has achieved the Healthy School Award, Investors in People, the Activemark for sport and the foundation stage of the International Schools award.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

St Mary's is an outstanding school. It provides its pupils with exceptional care and education and is held in extremely high regard by parents. 'Our children love going to school and are making great progress. They are stretched, but not beyond their capabilities, therefore avoiding frustration and despondency' was the comment of one, reflecting the views of many. The inspector fully supports this view.

The school is extremely well led and managed. The leadership of the headteacher is excellent and senior staff support him very well. They set very high but achievable expectations and targets and provide a very clear educational direction. As a result, impressive improvements have been made since the last inspection, particularly in the curriculum, monitoring, and the use of assessment data to inform teaching and learning and set challenging targets. Senior staff monitor provision rigorously and very effective strategies are rapidly put in place to overcome any weaknesses. Subject leaders monitor their subjects very well and have a positive impact on improving standards. Governors, who know the school well, provide very effective challenge and support. The school development plan identifies suitable priorities and appropriate actions, but does not always make it sufficiently clear how these are measured against outcomes for pupils.

Standards are above average overall, especially in Key Stage 2. In the most recent national tests, pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 reached standards well above average in reading and average standards in writing and mathematics. Since then the school has put in place very effective strategies to raise standards in writing and mathematics, and these are bringing rapid and impressive improvements. In the most recent end-of-Key Stage 2 national tests, in spite of a slight dip in results caused by higher-than-usual numbers of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, standards were still well above national averages in English and mathematics, and above average in science. During the inspection, standards seen in science, physical education, singing and dance were outstanding. Progress overall is very good. In the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, it is good, and in Key Stage 2 it is exceptional in English, mathematics and science. The progress made by pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, relative to their starting points, is particularly impressive because of the very carefully designed curriculum and the exceptionally good care, guidance, support and specialist teaching that they receive.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding, reflecting the strong Christian ethos of the school. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Pupils demonstrate very mature levels of responsibility and care for each other. This is seen in the seriousness with which they undertake responsibilities as house captains, playground and sports 'buddies' and as members of the school council. They are very proud of their achievements in supporting charities locally and globally and have a very good understanding of other cultures, encouraged by close links with schools in Spain and Kenya. Pupils enjoy coming to school very much and attendance is good. Behaviour and attitudes towards school and each other are exceptionally good. Pupils of all ages play very well together and in lessons they are enthusiastic, attentive and keen to do well. They demonstrate a very good awareness of how to keep themselves safe and healthy because the school promotes sport, healthy eating and safe practices very well. Strategies to help pupils develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being are very effective. As well as successfully developing high standards in basic skills such as literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology, the

school provides imaginative opportunities for pupils to develop team-working and problem-solving skills, such as a scheme based on the TV series 'The Apprentice'.

Teaching and learning are very good. Very well-planned lessons link closely to the needs of pupils and are based on the detailed tracking and accurate assessment of their progress. Because relationships between adults and pupils are very positive and teaching assistants effectively support very skilful teaching, the pace of lessons is brisk. The school's policy on marking is very effective and ensures that pupils are fully aware of their individual targets. A particular strength is the system by which pupils can respond to teachers' comments on their work, which helps teachers to be certain that pupils have a clear understanding of what they need to do to improve.

The quality of the curriculum is exemplary. Considerable imagination has gone into designing a curriculum that goes beyond statutory requirements and provides depth, breadth and cohesion across the subjects. A particular strength is the regular and well-planned curriculum enrichment, which all pupils benefit from. This includes a wide range of opportunities such as Spanish and personal financial management and unusual sports such as trampoline, archery and water polo.

The high quality of care, support and guidance given to pupils includes rigorous and effective procedures to ensure the safeguarding of pupils. Gifted and talented pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are accurately identified and exceptionally well supported. The needs of vulnerable pupils are actively championed and the school works hard with its community and outside agencies to ensure that all that can be done is done to support often very specific needs. Academic guidance is exceptionally good.

The school manages its resources very well. The learning environment is bright, attractive and well managed and the quality of displays is very good. Because it accurately assesses its own strengths and areas for development and ensures that improvements are achieved to a high standard, it has a very good capacity to make further improvements and provides exceptionally good value for money.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

The provision for Reception children is well led and managed and the adults work together effectively as a team. Children are extremely well cared for and the friendly and approachable staff go out of their way to make sure that they are happy and develop caring relationships with each other. Parents are kept very well informed of their children's progress. Procedures for inducting new children are very good. As a result, children settle in quickly and very much enjoy coming to school. Accurate and detailed assessments help to ensure that teaching closely matches children's needs and enables them to make good progress. Most achieve the goals expected by the time they transfer to Year 1, with some exceeding these standards. A high priority is given to developing children's confidence and independence and this has had a positive impact on learning, especially in communication, language and literacy. The curriculum is well planned, although the school recognises that the outside play area needs further upgrading, and has plans to address this.

## **What the school should do to improve further**

- Ensure that priorities for improvement in the school development plan can be clearly measured against defined outcomes for pupils.

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## 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?	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
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

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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	1

### The quality of provision

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

## Annex A

**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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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	1
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



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

Thank you for being so helpful, polite and friendly when I visited your school. I really enjoyed talking with you and seeing what you have been learning. I agree with your parents that St Mary's is a wonderful school and I was really impressed with everything that I saw, especially your behaviour and the way in which you talked about how much you enjoy coming to school. I was also very pleased to see how much you do for your community, how much you know about other cultures and how to keep safe and healthy. Well done!

All the adults in your school take great care of you and work really hard to make your lessons very interesting. I think your enrichment afternoons are particularly good. The teachers have a very good understanding of how well you are doing and give you very helpful guidance about how you can do better. As a result, you make very good progress and many of you (particularly those of you in Key Stage 2) do much better in English, mathematics and science than children of the same age across the country. Those of you who find learning hard do particularly well because you are so well supported.

The people who are in charge of the school, especially the headteacher, do a splendid job in making sure that things keep getting better, and that you get the best possible start in life. The one thing that I have asked them to do is to make sure that their plans for the future show exactly how much they will improve the standards of your education.

Well done, and all the very best for the future.

14 February 2008



Dear Children

**Inspection of St Mary's RC Primary School, Chippenham SN15 2AH**

Thank you for being so helpful, polite and friendly when I visited your school. I really enjoyed talking with you and seeing what you have been learning. I agree with your parents that St Mary's is a wonderful school and I was really impressed with everything that I saw, especially your behaviour and the way in which you talked about how much you enjoy coming to school. I was also very pleased to see how much you do for your community, how much you know about other cultures and how to keep safe and healthy. Well done!

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Well done, and all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Chris Nye  
Her Majesty's Inspector