

St Mary and St Margaret's Church of England Aided Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104097
Local Authority	Solihull
Inspection number	308510
Inspection dates	4–5 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Jim Henry

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	236
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Simon Douglas
Headteacher	Christine Perks
Date of previous school inspection	14 June 2004
School address	Southfield Avenue Castle Bromwich Birmingham B36 9AX
Telephone number	0121 7472025
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

St Mary and St Margaret is of average size. There is a nursery attached to the school. The school has a strong Christian ethos and serves the parish of St Mary and St Margaret. The percentages of pupils from minority ethnic groups and whose first language is not English are below the national averages. The majority of pupils come from White British families and the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above the national average.

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 and St Margaret is a satisfactory school with some strong aspects and a good capacity to improve. The recently appointed headteacher and deputy headteacher provide effective leadership and, with the newly formed senior leadership team, are working successfully to bring about change. This is clearly demonstrated by the raising of standards at the end of Year 2. Self-evaluation is satisfactory overall because the plans used by the school do not clearly identify the priorities and actions needed to raise achievement and standards for the older pupils. The governors are very supportive, visit regularly, and have a sound understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The pastoral care, guidance and support given to pupils are good. This is reflected in their good attendance and behaviour. They are polite and the positive Christian ethos in the school gives pupils a strong sense of empathy for others. Their enjoyment of the education provided is outstanding and pupils think that school is a genuinely pleasant place to be. They feel safe and have confidence in the staff to help them with any problems or concerns. There are robust and effective measures in place for safeguarding pupils that meet all statutory requirements. The school is working towards achieving Healthy School status and provides healthy snacks of fruit for pupils at playtime. Pupils have a satisfactory understanding of how to keep fit and healthy. Through supporting local and national charities, links with the parish and an effective school council, pupils make a good contribution to the local community. As a result, pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils enter school in the Foundation Stage with skills and knowledge that are broadly at the level expected for their age. They make good progress and by the end of Year 2, pupils' standards in reading, writing and mathematics are above average. Pupils' standards at the end of Year 6 in the 2007 national tests were also above average. However, the progress made by this group from their starting point was satisfactory, because pupils' achievement in Years 3 to 6 is inconsistent across the year groups and in different subjects. Pupils are prepared satisfactorily for their future education. Teaching and learning are satisfactory with elements of good practice. Teaching across the school is variable but it promotes positive behaviour and classes are successfully managed. The leadership team has not yet established a suitable monitoring system to ensure that the best elements of existing practice can be shared more widely, but teachers are beginning to use new pupil tracking data to identify and provide extra support to meet the needs of any underachieving pupils. Teaching assistants are used effectively and pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities benefit from the support given in lessons and in one-to-one sessions. They work successfully alongside their peers and make satisfactory progress. The curriculum is satisfactory in meeting the needs of learners and has been effectively integrated and developed further for younger pupils. This has had an impact on the standards and achievement of pupils at the end of Year 2, where standards are now above average. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities that enrich the curriculum and support the pupils' enjoyment in learning, including residential and local visits, and visitors to the school. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

When children enter the Nursery class, their skills are broadly as expected for their age. They enjoy school and parents are happy with the provision for their children. One commented in the parental questionnaire, 'The staff are always very approachable and my daughter loves her teachers and has always loved coming to school.' Children develop positive attitudes to learning

in the Foundation Stage and enjoy the practical activities provided. They receive a good level of pastoral care and make good progress in all aspects of their learning. The staff in the Nursery and the Reception class work well together and there are effective transition arrangements to ensure children settle quickly in to school. Assessments at the end of the Foundation Stage show that children make good progress and enter Year 1 with standards that are broadly average.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the achievement of pupils in Year 3 to Year 6, especially the more able, in English and mathematics.
- Develop robust systems for senior leaders to monitor and improve the consistency of good teaching and learning across the school.
- Focus school self-evaluation more effectively to inform future priorities for raising achievement and standards. A small proportion of the 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 make good progress in Year 1 and Year 2, and by the end of Year 2, results show that pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is above average. The school has tackled the underachievement, owing to staffing changes, that was evident in 2006, and pupils make satisfactory progress overall in English, mathematics and science. Standards at the end of Year 6 in 2007 were above average overall, but the percentage of pupils reaching the higher National Curriculum levels in English and mathematics was below average owing to the inconsistent progress that these pupils make from Year 3 to Year 6. However, following the introduction of strategies to track pupils' progress across the school, their rate of progress is beginning to improve. The school is beginning to use this tracking information to set challenging targets for pupils.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

'I just love this school' was a comment by one pupil. This reflects the views of very nearly all pupils and parents. Successful assemblies and visits to the parish church ensure that the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good. They take moral responsibilities seriously and issues such as bullying are not a problem because pupils get on well with each other, including pupils from different ethnic backgrounds. The school councillors contribute to the strong sense of community by ensuring that the views of their classmates are represented. They showed great maturity when speaking to the new rector about his contribution to school life. Older pupils sensibly undertake the many responsibilities they are given around the school. They also plan and carry out fund raising events such as the 2007 BBC Children in Need appeal and the annual Poppy Day collection. Pupils use equipment safely. Outside at the 'Forest School' pupils learn to handle tools and equipment, and learn to manage risk. Pupils are developing satisfactorily many of the personal and learning skills that they will need for their eventual working life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Where teaching is good it is characterised by positive relationships, clear explanations and activities that not only meets pupils' needs but are also interesting and enjoyable. Pupils effectively work together and share ideas and this develops their learning and enjoyment in lessons. For younger pupils, progress is good because learning is based on accurate assessment and staff working together to address gaps in learning. Where teaching is satisfactory it does not always challenge the needs of all groups of pupils, especially the more able. The school has tracking information about the progress of individual pupils. However, this is relatively new and has not yet fully made a difference to the planning of work to meet the needs of all pupils. Therefore, they do not always make the progress that they could. Marking is often linked to pupils' targets and includes constructive comments which help pupils understand how well they have achieved and what to do to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is particularly good for younger pupils because it has been adapted successfully to meet their needs. The areas of learning in the curriculum are integrated together and this provides younger pupils with practical experiences that allow them to understand the links between subjects. This approach, introduced by the new senior leadership team, has enabled the pupils to make the good progress seen by the end of Year 2. The curriculum followed by older pupils is not always matched to their needs, especially in English and mathematics, with the result that they make satisfactory progress. There are good opportunities in Years 4 and 6 for a residential visit, and for older pupils to participate with other schools in sporting and musical events. Dedicated days in information and communication technology and science and an Arts Week engage pupils and add to their enjoyment of learning. The recent innovation of visits by Year 2 pupils to a 'Forest School' and visitors such as a vet and the local fire brigade also enrich the curriculum and promote pupils' enjoyment of school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Parents sincerely value the strong pastoral care given by the school. One parent wrote, 'My daughter has thrived at St Mary and St Margaret and has developed a real love of learning thanks to the commitment of the teaching and pastoral staff.' Pupils' attendance and attitude to their work are good and they are soundly guided in how well they are doing and how to improve. Pupils' behaviour is good and they effectively support one another, as demonstrated by the use of 'playground buddies' to help pupils play successfully together. As a result, pupils feel safe in school and their emotional well-being benefits from the support given. The school has worked satisfactorily to raise the pupils' awareness of living a healthy lifestyle and the importance of a good diet. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are positively supported by the school and other agencies to learn alongside their peers.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The senior leadership team has been restructured and the changes made have generated a determined team approach to improve the work of the school. Selfevaluation is satisfactory but does not focus clearly on identifying the priorities needed to raise standards and achievements. The monitoring of the new pupil progress tracking system is given close attention and there are planned interventions for any underachieving pupils. However, this is in its early stages of development and has yet to have a full impact on the progress made by pupils. The formal monitoring of teaching is planned but has yet to be fully implemented. The governors take their responsibilities seriously and effectively hold the school to account. The school is using pupils' past achievements to set overall targets in English, mathematics and science that are realistic but challenging. Leadership and management have good capacity to improve the school because of the drive and commitment of the headteacher and senior leadership team. This is shown by the improvement to the curriculum for younger pupils that has raised standards and achievements at the end of Year 2. However, leadership and management remain satisfactory because standards have not been raised enough for the older pupils.

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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?	3
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?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ 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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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?	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

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

- March 2008 Dear Pupils Inspection of St Mary and St Margaret's CofE VA Primary School, Castle Bromwich, B36 9AX Thank you for your welcome and help during our visit to your school. We enjoyed talking to you, looking at your work, and watching you learn in lessons. All the teachers and adults work hard to make sure that you enjoy and feel safe at St Mary and St Margaret's, and we judged that it is giving you a satisfactory education because you make steady progress by the time you leave at the end of Year 6. Here are some of the things we found out about your school.
- You told us that you really enjoy school and are always willing to help in any way you can.
- You work hard in lessons and are eager to do your best.
- You are polite and kind to each other and to the adults in the school.
- The younger children in the Nursery and Reception classes do particularly well. To help you do even better, we have asked that teachers and adults make sure that:
 - you all make good progress in English and mathematics in the different classes, but especially the more able pupils
 - the teaching and learning are watched carefully and improved so that all your lessons are good
 - the work of the whole school is looked at carefully in order to identify the most important things that could be better, and put plans in place to improve them. You can help by continuing to work hard with your teachers and being helpful and kind to one another. I especially want to wish the older pupils every success in their preparation for Confirmation. Good luck for the future Jim Henry Lead inspector

Annex B



6 March 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Mary and St Margaret's CofE VA Primary School, Castle Bromwich, B36 9AX

Thank you for your welcome and help during our visit to your school. We enjoyed talking to you, looking at your work, and watching you learn in lessons. All the teachers and adults work hard to make sure that you enjoy and feel safe at St Mary and St Margaret's, and we judged that it is giving you a satisfactory education because you make steady progress by the time you leave at the end of Year 6.

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You can help by continuing to work hard with your teachers and being helpful and kind to one another. I especially want to wish the older pupils every success in their preparation for Confirmation.

Good luck for the future

Jim Henry
Lead inspector