

# St Mary's CofE (VC) J and I School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	107538
<b>Local Authority</b>	Calderdale
<b>Inspection number</b>	309426
<b>Inspection dates</b>	14–15 November 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Peter Jones

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 controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	87
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Jim Skelsey
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Simon Scott
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	3 November 2003
<b>School address</b>	Lumb Lane Mill Bank Sowerby Bridge West Yorkshire HX6 3EJ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01422 823353
<b>Fax number</b>	01422 823353

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

This small primary school in a semi-rural area takes in pupils from a variety of socio- economic backgrounds. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for a free school meal is low and the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good school. It provides good value for money and has made good progress since the last inspection. In view of its current performance, it has good capacity for future improvement. The school's motto declares that St Mary's is 'The Place to Be'. The school's pupils and the overwhelming majority of parents certainly agree.

This is a very happy and optimistic school with a genuine family atmosphere. Parents say that 'Everyone is made to feel at home in St Mary's.' An advantage of the small numbers on the school roll is that pupils, parents and staff get to know each other very well. Pupils enjoy school. Their attendance is consistently above average and they are eager to take part in the wide range of interesting activities provided for them. They appreciate the recent improvements the school has made to its building and resources. Pupils say they feel safe and protected and that there is no bullying or discrimination. Older pupils are protective of their younger schoolmates in the corridors and playgrounds. Pupils are aware of the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle and benefit from a wide programme of physical exercise. Behaviour is excellent at all times and pupils take pride in the school and its achievements. The school's reward system celebrates success of all kinds in lessons and assemblies and this helps to motivate learners of all ages and abilities. The contribution of pupils to the wider community is excellent. Pupils take responsibility from an early age. The school effectively ensures that pupils have the skills and abilities they will need to succeed in later life.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Pupils progress well to reach above average standards by the end of Year 6. This is the result of the school's successful actions to improve the effectiveness of teaching and curriculum. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported and achieve as well as their classmates. Staff generally cope well with the demands of teaching mixed-age classes. However, in some lessons teachers do not fully match tasks to pupils' needs. For example, pupils who are more able are not always provided with the appropriate challenge they need to fully develop their skills and to progress rapidly.

The school's curriculum ensures that pupils' basic skills are well promoted. It provides pupils with rich opportunities and wide choice. The care, guidance and support provided by the school are good. There is a warm and welcoming atmosphere and a sense of common purpose. Pupils' work is marked conscientiously and it is praised, but there is not always enough guidance about how pupils can further improve their work. Although the school carefully tracks progress, individual pupils are not made aware of the targets set for them. As a result, they are not as fully involved in their own learning as they could be.

Leadership and management are good. The school's headteacher brings great vision and energy to the school and enjoys the total support of his colleagues. The key priorities to raise pupils' achievement and to improve the school's fabric and resources have been tackled well. The introduction of effective management systems has enabled the school to check its work more carefully and plan accordingly. The governing body carries out its roles and responsibilities with skill and insight. The school's self-evaluation is accurate. It knows itself well and is aware of what is yet to be achieved if it is to realise its well focused plans to improve further.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

Quality and standards in the Foundation Stage are good. The reorganisation of children into early years and infants has improved the effectiveness of teaching and learning. Reception children are given opportunities to work with older pupils, but the school has been careful to ensure that they receive the curriculum they need to progress as a distinct group. Their needs are quickly and accurately assessed when they join the school. Most children have good speaking, listening and personal and social skills, but are less confident with aspects of reading, writing and mathematics. Good teaching is now raising standards in these basic skills and further enhancing children's personal development. As a result, progress is good. Behaviour and attitudes are excellent and the children clearly enjoy their learning. They have benefited from additional space and extra resources. Teaching assistants make an effective contribution to the children's good progress.

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

- Ensure that the more able pupils are set challenging targets and tasks to enable them to achieve as well as they can.
- Ensure that all pupils are fully aware of how they are progressing and what they can do to improve their work.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Achievement in the school is good. Children enter the school with skills and abilities that are in line with national expectations. They receive good teaching and make good progress to reach standards that are above national averages by the end of Year 6. The school has implemented successful strategies to improve the achievements of pupils in Years 1 and 2 and in writing across the school. These are now good. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress as a result of the skilled and sensitive support they receive.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Visitors to the school are greeted warmly by friendly and respectful pupils. Courtesy and tolerance are valued highly. Pupils are sensitive to the faiths and lifestyles of different cultures, but currently there are too few links with schools and communities of different ethnic backgrounds that would further improve pupils' experience and understanding. Service to the school and to the local community is strong. Pupils contribute to a variety of local and national charities. The very capable school council has raised funds to improve the school and has taken a role in staff interviews, including that of the current headteacher. Pupils have a strong sense of their school and its community. They have a good understanding of health and safety issues. They eat healthily and take regular exercise. They eagerly seize opportunities to take part in dramatic productions and to learn a musical instrument. Pupils develop well the skills they will need in later life, for example teamwork and decision making. They also take part in managing fundraising events and have a good understanding of the world of work.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good and a significant factor in the school's improved achievement. Pupils' good behaviour and the quality of the relationships they enjoy with staff underpin their effective learning. Staff make good use of resources such as interactive whiteboards to make lessons more stimulating and to interest pupils. In the best lessons, there are high expectations, good pace and work is carefully matched to the age and abilities of all pupils. In some mixed-age classes the work set is not sufficiently varied or challenging, particularly for the most able, whose progress slows as a result. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together to ensure that pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive the appropriate support that they need in order for them to make good progress.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

The quality of the curriculum is good. It promotes well pupils' good personal development and their effective academic achievement. The curriculum generally ensures that the needs of all pupils are met. However, it is not always effective in meeting the needs of the more able pupils in mixed-age classes. Pupils find the way the curriculum is taught, based on the six areas of their learning, highly enjoyable and motivating. Pupils have lots of visits and visitors together with many out-of-school activities in sport, music and drama. These contribute significantly to their personal, physical, aesthetic and academic development. Pupils particularly enjoy the innovative 'Fantastic Friday' afternoon session when the school divides into family groups to take part in activities as diverse as mosaic art, knitting and ecology.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good and are central to the school's values. The safety and security of pupils is a priority. Pupils are well cared for and protected. They know to whom they can turn when they are troubled or upset. This helps them make good progress in their learning. Parents are greatly appreciative of the school's work. Child protection and health and safety arrangements meet local and national guidelines. The systems the school uses to ensure pupils' good behaviour and consistent attendance are very successful. Academic guidance is improving, with pupils beginning to be given opportunities to assess their own work. However, the school does not yet share information about individual targets with pupils and teachers' marking does not always provide pupils with enough advice about how to improve.

## Leadership and management

#### Grade: 2

The headteacher's drive and ambition inspire the school. Morale is high and there is a genuine desire on the part of staff and pupils to take the school forward. Changes to how pupils are organised into class groups, a radical new curriculum structure and improved teaching and learning have been key to the school's improved achievement. These advances have been supported by impressive new resources and remodelled and extended school accommodation.

This has made learning more exciting and stimulating and given the school a new pride in its achievements. The school has detailed data to inform its work and planning. Senior managers check on performance well, but subject coordinators currently are insufficiently involved in raising standards. The governing body is highly involved in the work of the school. It has a clear view of how the school needs to improve and the progress made. Governors have shown imagination and ingenuity in providing the school with the funds and resources it needs to realise its ambitions.

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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
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?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
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	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?	2

<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>	2
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	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

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

Inspection of St Mary's CE (VC) Junior and Infant School, Sowerby Bridge, HX6 3EJ

I am writing to you to let you know what I found out about your school after our recent inspection. I enjoyed my time with you. Thank you for making me very welcome and for telling me about your school.

You go to a good school. I saw how hard you work in lessons and I was very impressed with your behaviour at all times. You are very proud of your school and its achievements. You told me how much you like the improvements to the school building and having new books and equipment. You care about each other and are safe and happy. Your school council has helped to raise money for school and charities and has given advice about the appointment of staff. You enjoy your lessons and taking part in the clubs and activities that your school provides for you. It was wonderful that so many of you took part in the night walk with governors, staff, parents and past pupils. I was pleased that so many of you are learning to play musical instruments. Your progress is improving because of your hard work and the good teaching you receive. All the staff and governors really care about you and look after you very well. They are always thinking of ways they can make St Mary's even better.

I would like you to do even better with your work and so I have suggested two things that will help. I would like your teachers to make sure that the work you are set always challenges you to do as well as you can. Also I have asked them to let you know what your learning targets are and how to help you reach them by giving you more helpful comments when they mark your work.

You can help by continuing to work hard and thinking of how you can improve even more. It will be worth the effort and I know you can do it.