

# St Mary's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	116343
<b>Local Authority</b>	Southampton
<b>Inspection number</b>	312269
<b>Inspection dates</b>	20–21 November 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Michael Pye

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>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	469
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Phil Hand
<b>Headteacher</b>	Miss Charlotte Brown
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	9 November 2006
<b>School address</b>	Ascupart Street Southampton SO14 1LU
<b>Telephone number</b>	02380 223930
<b>Fax number</b>	02380 224605

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Situated in a socially and economically deprived area of the inner city, this is a larger than average primary school. The number of pupils entitled to free school meals is well above average. The nature of the school population has changed considerably over recent years, and there are now very high numbers of pupils from ethnic minority groups, and well above average numbers who have English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is also well above average. High numbers of pupils join or leave the school other than in Year 1 or the Foundation Stage. The school has been nationally recognised for its exceptional delivery of the National School Sport Strategy.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005 HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

The school provides pupils with a satisfactory standard of education. One parent wrote, 'The school has worked hard to improve the teaching. I can see this through my children's progress.' Focused leadership by the senior management team has resulted in improvements in the quality of teaching and learning, but also in pupils' standards and achievement, and attendance. There is a satisfactory capacity to improve the school.

Pupils' current work show standards are at the lower end of the broadly average category. This reflects satisfactory achievement levels for the majority of pupils. Despite the very low starting points of many pupils, achievement overall is no better than satisfactory because, as the school recognises, past inadequate teaching has resulted in pockets of underachievement remaining. The results of the 2007 national tests at the end of Year 6 showed that pupils had achieved well in English, satisfactorily in mathematics, and unsatisfactorily in science. This was a good improvement on previous years, and reflects the shift in the quality of teaching and learning which is now satisfactory. Some good teaching was observed, but not enough to bring about the accelerated progress of all pupils. There remain inconsistencies, for example, in the degree to which all teachers plan work that sufficiently matches pupils' needs.

The school meets the pastoral needs of pupils very well. It has very good procedures for introducing new pupils, and consequently the majority settle quickly, including those who have no English. This is a very inclusive school, making effective use of a number of bi-lingual teaching assistants to help support pupils and their parents. The management of pupils with English as an additional language, and pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is good. One result has been that teachers are benefiting well from valuable written guidance about how to identify the differing needs of these pupils.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory. Behaviour is satisfactory. A minority of parents and pupils felt that occasional bullying takes place. The school is addressing this through counselling and the personal and social development programme. Pupils enjoy school, and react particularly positively to the increased opportunities they have to learn in an active way. Year 2 pupils showed excitement when asked to mimic an electrical circuit by holding hands in a circle. The satisfactory curriculum is under review, with the aim of providing more opportunities for pupils to investigate and solve problems. This is particularly so in science where there is an inconsistent approach to how regularly the subject is taught.

The highly committed headteacher has promoted effective teamwork, which has brought about improvement. There has been a good approach to the induction of the many, newly qualified teachers, and a strong commitment to the professional development of all staff. Senior leaders have been very active in monitoring, but there are missed opportunities for other managers to become more skilled in evaluating and leading on initiatives. Attendance has been well improved and is now satisfactory. The governors act as a critical friend to the school and provide satisfactory support.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 3

The Foundation Stage has improved during the past year. While provision remains satisfactory, there are an increasing number of good features. Most children enter with levels of skills and knowledge well below those expected for their age. A large number have little, or no English, and some have had no prior experience of formal education. Achievement is satisfactory, but progress in aspects of children's emotional, social and personal development is good. Strong teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants help give children well structured group sessions and some good opportunities to plan and choose their own activities.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards and achievement through ensuring a higher proportion of good teaching.
- Ensure science is taught more regularly, and that pupils' investigative and problem-solving skills are consistently reinforced in these lessons.
- Ensure that opportunities are maximised for subject leaders to develop their monitoring and evaluation skills, and lead on initiatives.

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 enter Year 1 with literacy and numeracy levels well below those expected. The end of Year 2 assessments in 2007, show well below average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. This reflects the high numbers of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities in that year group. Moreover, the numbers of pupils with English as an additional language was well above average, as was the rate of pupils entering the school other than in the Foundation Stage or Year 1. Standards by the end of Year 6 in 2007 showed an improving picture, although they remained below average. This constitutes satisfactory achievement overall for pupils, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities. In science, achievement was below average, reflecting the inconsistent approach to how the subject is delivered. Well-targeted support contributed to many pupils with English as an additional language making better progress.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 3

Relationships are positive and pupils' enjoyment of school is good. Their adoption of healthy lifestyles is satisfactory. For example, healthy eating has improved because of the national free fruit scheme and the introduction of 'Wake up, Shake up' sessions encourages physical fitness. The majority of parents and pupils feel that the school provides a safe and caring environment. Counselling and the personal, social, and health education lessons give pupils good opportunities to discuss issues that concern them. Pupils make satisfactory contributions to the school, for example, when older pupils become buddies to younger pupils. The school council oversees charity fund-raising activities. Pupils' preparation for future economic well-being is satisfactory, reflecting the current levels of basic skills, and the school's promotion of opportunities for

teamwork and 'talk-partners'. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Good relationships in lessons result in pupils wanting to participate. There is a consistent approach to lesson planning. Good features include clear learning objectives and sharing with pupils what they are aiming for in lessons. Pupils are motivated well, and the pace of lessons is helped by the effective use of the interactive white boards, which enlivens learning. However, where teaching is less effective a small number of pupils, particularly boys, lose concentration and become restless. This slows progress. Teachers at the start of lessons identify the prior learning of pupils well. In some lessons, however, there is insufficient time for pupils to review their learning at the end of lessons in order to check on the progress they have made. On occasions, the pupils at an early stage of learning English require more focused support to fulfil a task. For example, when designing a container for money, some pupils did not know words such as 'leather' when describing the material.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum provides satisfactorily for the systematic development of pupils' skills in literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology. It is made accessible to pupils with English as an additional language, through the good use of such strategies as 'Switch On'. A more creative approach to pupils' learning is being introduced. This is at an early stage, and the changes have yet to fully impact on achievement. For example, whilst some opportunities exist for pupils to investigate and solve problems, these approaches are not fully maximised across all subjects. The inconsistent regularity of science teaching does not allow sufficiently for the constant reinforcement of such investigative approaches. Pupils' enjoyment of learning is well enhanced through a wide range of clubs, visits and visitors. Activities provide very good opportunities for sport and there are close links with the local professional football club. Pupils benefit from specialist teaching in music and the junior choir has received awards in the local music and drama festival.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 3**

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. However, the school has a very strong commitment to the pastoral care and support for pupils. It uses a good range of external agencies to support vulnerable pupils, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities. Effective systems have been established that benefit pupils with specific emotional, behavioural and social needs. This includes training for teaching assistants, a nurture group, and the Emotional Literacy Support Assistants. Pupils, including those who join the school throughout the year, settle quickly as a consequence of good induction procedures. Pupils have literacy and numeracy targets but not all know them. Teachers inconsistently reinforce these targets in lessons, and when marking. Consequently, not all pupils know how to improve their work.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

Senior managers in the school have correctly, and successfully, concentrated on improving the quality of teaching and learning. Records show regular lesson observations taking place, and valuable guidance is given to staff. This has also improved achievement levels, but there is a recognition that teaching needs to become more consistently good. Improvement has taken place as the consequence of well-focused monitoring and evaluation, and clear communication. For example, the effective deputy headteacher carries out on-going tracking of attendance and pupil progress levels, and quickly identifies to staff where necessary intervention is required. This is one example where more rigorous systems and clear procedures have been established. Consequently, staff know their responsibilities and what is expected of them. Whilst subject co-ordinators carry out monitoring and evaluation, there is insufficient attention paid to establishing starting points against which progress can be measured. Some aspects of whole-school evaluation have similar shortcomings. School targets are challenging and realistic. Governors are increasing their knowledge of the school through subject leader reports, and regular visits. Not all visits are sufficiently focused on aspects of school performance.

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**Annex A**

## Inspection judgements

<b>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</b>	<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
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	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
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

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**Annex B**

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

3 December 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Mary's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary  
School, Southampton, SO14 1LU

Thank you for welcoming us into your school during our recent visit. We listened carefully to what you had to say. We believe your school has improved, and provides you with a satisfactory education.

Your headteacher and the other adults in the school have worked hard to improve things. For example, the quality of your lessons has got better, and teaching is now satisfactory. You show obvious enjoyment when asked to be more active in lessons. Most of you are making satisfactory progress in your work. We have asked the school to try to make all lessons good so that you do even better in your work.

Another way your school has improved is in encouraging you to come to school more regularly. Remember that the more you come to school, the better you will understand your work, and the faster you will progress.

We also liked the way that the school cares for you. Many of you benefit well from the support you get from such people as the bi-lingual assistants. Your school also uses a good variety of people from outside to support you. Most of you behave well and get on well together.

Your school is also trying hard to give you more challenging and exciting things to do in lessons. In mathematics, you regularly get opportunities to investigate and solve problems. We have asked that more subjects take this approach to lessons. The school is going to look at giving you a science lesson every week, and to give you more chance to carry out investigations, and solve problems. Given what we saw in some lessons, you really enjoy this! The choir has to be congratulated on its success in the local festival.

Thank you again, and on behalf of the inspection team I wish you well for the future.

Yours faithfully,

Michael Pye

Lead Inspector