

St Mary's CofE Controlled Primary School, Byfleet

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125150
Local Authority	Surrey
Inspection number	315167
Inspection dates	3–4 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Ian Wilson

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	354
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs S Cushing
Headteacher	Miss C Neef
Date of previous school inspection	6 October 2003
School address	Hart Road Byfleet West Byfleet KT14 7NJ
Telephone number	01932 410300
Fax number	01932 410303

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

St Mary's Church of England Primary is a large school which serves a mixed residential area. Most of the pupils are from a white British background. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is slightly above average and the proportion entitled to free school meals is average. In September 2006, the school underwent a major change when the local first school closed and all its pupils joined St Mary's. The site of this school, which is half a mile from the main school site, is used as the base for teaching the younger pupils. Prior to 2006, the first school was a feeder school for St Mary's, with pupils transferring there when they left at the end of Year 3. A building programme to relocate all pupils onto a single site is currently underway.

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's is a satisfactory school with some good features. It has been through a period of major upheaval during the past two years due to the closure of the nearby first school and its merger with St. Mary's. The process has been managed very well by the headteacher and she, together with the governors who played a very important strategic role in the development, have ensured that pupils' education has not suffered during all the changes.

A particular strength of the school is the way it develops pupils' personally. Pupils behave well, relate well to each other and learn to take responsibility. They know how to stay safe and healthy and develop a good understanding of other cultures. All this is underpinned by the school's warm and welcoming Christian ethos in which relationships are good and all individuals are valued and well looked after. 'Our daughter is happy, confident and enjoys school which is a reflection of the way she is being taught.' typified the views of many parents.

Standards attained by pupils by the end of Year 6 are average in all subject areas. Recent action taken by the school, such as developing pupils' problem solving skills in mathematics and their understanding of grammar in English, is leading to a consistent rise in standards, especially in mathematics. However, pupils still do not have enough opportunities for developing their writing skills for improvements in English to be sustained.

Teaching and the curriculum are satisfactory and they enable pupils to make satisfactory progress as they move through the school. However, higher attaining pupils, though making satisfactory progress, are not challenged sufficiently in lessons to do even better. The school provides good care and support for vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties. As a result, these pupils progress as well as others in the school.

Teaching and support staff work well together under the caring leadership of the headteacher. Professional development is systematic and staff readily take on new ideas. The procedures in the school for evaluating teaching, learning and the curriculum, and for planning improvement, are satisfactory. Pupils' progress is monitored but the arrangements are still being developed. They lack rigour and are not used enough to plan work or set challenging targets. Consequently, they have not had a substantial impact on raising achievement. The school has addressed the issues raised in the previous inspection successfully, and the steady rise in standards shows that it has a satisfactory capacity to continue to improve.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The recent restructuring brought the previously separate Nursery and Reception classes together onto a single site, with a member of staff having overall responsibility for the Foundation Stage. Provision is now good and has brought about an improvement in children's progress. Children start in the Nursery with average levels of attainment. They settle in quickly and make good progress and are now attaining at above the expected levels in nearly all areas of learning by the end of the Reception year.

Children are well taught by experienced teachers, who have a good knowledge of how children learn. Children's progress is tracked thoroughly and frequently, through careful assessment. The information is used very well to ensure that the learning activities meet their needs. The curriculum is stimulating and enables children to develop good personal skills, such as independence, as well as developing their knowledge and understanding of the world and their

reading, writing and numeracy skills. There is not yet a fully consistent approach to planning throughout nursery and reception which hampers further improvement in provision. Outdoor facilities are limited but the existing space is well used by teachers. The Foundation Stage is well led and there is good teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that all pupils are sufficiently challenged in lessons, particularly the more able.
- Improve the tracking of pupils' progress so that it is more rigorous and the information is used to plan support and set challenging targets.
- Raise standards by improving pupils' writing skills and providing more opportunities for writing in different areas of the curriculum.

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' achievement is satisfactory. The standards attained by pupils at both the end of Year 2 and the end of Year 6 in national assessments are average in all areas of the curriculum. Improvements in the curriculum and in teaching are leading to improvements in pupils' progress and standards each year. Their overall progress is satisfactory but higher attaining pupils do not make as much progress as they could because they are insufficiently challenged in some lessons. Pupils with learning difficulties make similar progress to other pupils because they are provided with regular, well-planned additional support. The school met its challenging targets for mathematics in 2007. It exceeded its targets for English, but these were much less ambitious.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Relationships in the school are good and pupils are polite, considerate, and respect and cooperate with each other very well. They fully embrace the Christian values that underpin school life. Pupils' enjoyment of school is very evident in their enthusiastic participation in lessons. Pupils have good knowledge of what they need to do to live a healthy lifestyle, including eating well and taking exercise. They make a good contribution to the school and wider community, through work as helpers, being members of the school council and contributing to charities. Pupils' strong personal and social skills, coupled with their sound basic skills, enable them to be well prepared for the next stage in their education. The rates of attendance in the school are satisfactory.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teachers are enthusiastic and have positive relationships with their pupils. They prepare interesting lessons and they use good strategies to manage their classrooms so that pupils behave well and are motivated to learn. They make good use of resources such as interactive white boards, which add interest and contribute to learning. Objectives for lessons are clear.

Although teaching has significant strengths, it is satisfactory overall. This is because the match of work to pupils' needs is not always appropriate, sometimes being not challenging enough and on occasions being pitched at too high a level for some pupils. Also, time in some lessons is not used to best effect with the pace sometimes being a bit slow or pupils spending too much time listening. Pupils' work is generally marked thoroughly and good work always praised. However, marking does not always give pupils guidance on how to improve. Pupils do have targets to aim for, but teachers do not ensure that all pupils know them, so their effectiveness is reduced.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The main strength of the curriculum is the way it contributes to pupils' personal development. The existing programme of personal, social and health education is being developed well and the award of 'Healthy Schools' status reflects the good work done in enabling pupils to know how to live a healthy lifestyle. Whole-school activities such as assemblies, 'theme weeks' and field trips contribute to making school enjoyable and developing pupils' personal skills. The programme of additional support is good. Teaching assistants working with small groups of pupils with learning difficulties meet their needs well. Despite these strengths, the curriculum is satisfactory overall because of inconsistencies in the match of work for some pupils and the lack of enough opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills. Both of these weaknesses limit pupils' progress. There is a good range of extra-curricular enrichment activities such as reading, music and sport. Pupils' rates of participation in these activities are satisfactory.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Teachers and support staff know pupils and their needs well and there is a high level of commitment amongst staff to caring for pupils. Safeguarding procedures in the school, such as first aid and arrangements for ensuring child protection, are secure. Pupils say that they feel safe and have an adult that they can talk to if they have concerns. Arrangements to keep track of pupils' academic progress are very thorough in the Foundation Stage but are not yet well developed throughout the rest of the school. Children are well prepared for entry into the Nursery and for transfer to secondary school. Good use is made of outside agencies to provide specialist support for pupils where needed.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher, who is well supported by a capable leadership team, has very successfully managed the recent merger. She has established a single school, where the staff work harmoniously together, despite the split site. All staff share a sense of purpose and common values. They have successfully maintained pupils' good personal development and steadily improved their progress, despite the recent changes.

The school evaluates its practice and plans for improvement satisfactorily. It knows its main strengths and weaknesses, identifies appropriate areas for development. However, some procedures are still being established or lack rigour, such as arrangements to monitor pupils' progress and use the data to raise standards. Some of the school's judgements, particularly

relating to the analysis of performance data, are over-optimistic so targets for improvement have not been consistently challenging. Subject leaders are beginning to be involved in analysing standards in their subjects and setting targets. Links with parents are satisfactory.

Governors carry out their statutory functions well and they have a sound grasp of its strengths and weaknesses. They have played a key role in the reorganisation of the two schools, devoting a great deal of time to working with the staff and the community throughout the process.

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

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	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
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	2

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?	3

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	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

14 March 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Mary's CofE Controlled Primary School, Byfleet, West Byfleet, KT14 7NJ

You may remember that three inspectors recently came to visit your school. Thank you for making us feel so welcome. You were all very polite, confident and told us what you thought very clearly. We really enjoyed meeting you, your teachers and the other people who work in the school. We are writing to let you know what we found out.

Both you and your parents said how much you enjoyed school and get on with each other. You feel safe, well looked after and work hard. We were particularly impressed with the way your school helps you to develop good personal skills, such as self-confidence, being responsible and knowing how to stay safe and healthy.

Your headteacher and teachers have made your school a caring and happy place and you get a satisfactory education. To make it even better, we have asked them to help you do better by ensuring that the work that you are given is well matched to what you are capable of doing and to give you more opportunities to develop your skills in writing. We have also asked them to keep better track of how well you are doing, in order to check that you are progressing as well as you can and that you are getting all the help that you need.

Thank you again for being so friendly. We enjoyed meeting you. I send you my best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Ian Wilson

Lead Inspector