

St Mary's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102329
Local Authority	Havering
Inspection number	323622
Inspection dates	19–20 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Bernice Magson

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	425
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Mark Adams
Headteacher	Mr Michael Coy
Date of previous school inspection	23 January 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Hornchurch Road Hornchurch RM12 4TL
Telephone number	01708 448 430
Fax number	01708 449 807

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	19–20 March 2009
Inspection number	323622

© Crown copyright 2009

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a large primary school serving the Catholic parish of 'St Mary, Mother of God' in the town of Hornchurch. Children are admitted to the Early Years Foundation Stage in the autumn term of the school year in which they are five years of age. Most pupils are of White British origin, although the proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is increasing. A small proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language. An above-average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities including speech, language, communication and moderate learning difficulties and dyslexia. A few pupils have Autistic Spectrum disorders. There are more girls on roll than boys, and the difference is significant in Years 3 and 6. Family and adult learning programmes and other extended services are available on-site.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

'My child gets up every morning looking forward to going to school', commented one parent, expressing the positive views of many others. Indeed, pupils are very happy to attend this good school, participating enthusiastically in all it has to offer. The headteacher, staff, governors, pupils and parents share a common vision, focused on the belief that every child matters. Adults nurture and promote pupils' safety, health, and enjoyment of school, and prepare them well for their future economic well-being. As a result, pupils are confident, independent learners who make excellent contributions to the school, and to local and global communities.

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. Relationship and behaviour are excellent, and pupils have extremely positive attitudes to learning. Pupils are fit and healthy and feel safe and secure at school. They are well-mannered and polite, and act very responsibly when undertaking tasks around the school. The school council is proactive in ensuring that pupils can share their ideas and they know that they are trusted to make the right decisions. They have correctly highlighted that play facilities and equipment are not good enough at break and lunchtimes for pupils in Years 1 and 2, and staff have agreed to rectify this concern.

Achievement is good because teaching and learning and the curriculum are good. From starting points at the expected level, pupils make good overall progress and reach above-average standards by Year 6. Teachers predict that the current Year 6 will attain their individual targets in national tests, and more pupils will achieve the higher levels in English, mathematics and science. This is because of the good links between subjects and the development of a greater number of practical activities to interest and excite boys more in learning. Currently, standards in handwriting and pupils' presentation of work are inconsistent in quality, because of differences in teachers' interpretation of school policy.

The headteacher and his deputy set challenging targets to raise standards, and progress is monitored regularly. Increasingly, other staff are becoming involved in target setting, monitoring and review of the work of the school, although their actions are not yet undertaken with sufficient regularity and rigour, because their roles are still developing. Some teachers lack professional knowledge in analysing and using data to identify the school's strengths and weaknesses. The school's contribution to community cohesion is good. Actions are very well planned and effective, although not always clearly evaluated. The school has a good capacity to make further improvements because of the dedication of staff and excellent teamwork.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children are happily settled and achieving very well in the Reception Year because of the warm and friendly welcome from staff, who provided outstanding pastoral care and support. By the end of the Reception Year, many children reach goals beyond those expected for their age. A strength of the provision is the personal development of children, which is excellent. Children play together extremely well, share their toys willingly, and take a keen interest in the achievement of friends. They listen intently to staff and participate confidently in a wide and varied range of experiences. The curriculum has an excellent balance of activities which are led by adults, and opportunities for children to select things for themselves. Learning is very well planned around a central theme, and successfully includes all areas of learning. Following a visit to Colchester Zoo, for example, children shared stories about zoo animals, made models

from junk materials, and participated in a treasure hunt to find woolly worms hidden outdoors. Children are challenged very effectively, because there is excellent teamwork between staff. Achievements are recorded in good detail and shared very well with parents. Many improvements have been made in the key stage over time. Role-play areas are now identified for development, so that all children are challenged and engaged more in activities. Monitoring and evaluation of provision is limited because the leader of the key stage has an extended role across the school. Nevertheless, staff work together well to bring developments to the key stage, for example in the recently developed outdoor area. Their outstanding teaching and planning of an excellent curriculum are driving improvement forward.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of pupils' skills of handwriting and presentation.
- Develop a greater range of activities at break and lunchtimes for pupils in Years 1 and 2.
- Enhance the roles of subject and key stage leaders in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are above average by Year 2 and well above average by Year 6. Pupils make good progress over time, because of the good quality of teaching and access to a relevant and interesting curriculum. There are significant variations in test results over time. In 2008 standards dipped, because of a wide-ranging variation in the capabilities of pupils in the year group and an increased numbers of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. In the previous year, pupils attained standards which were in the top 10% of schools nationally. Higher-attaining pupils achieve well, because of their highly developed skills of independence in learning, and extremely positive attitudes. Additional, targeted support aids the learning of some pupils, including those with learning needs and disabilities and those speaking English as an additional language, and they achieve as well as their peers.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils thoroughly enjoy school, as is evident in their excellent attendance and very positive attitudes to learning. They have a very good understanding of the steps to take in learning in order to be successful. They have an excellent knowledge of how to take care of themselves, and are keen to develop healthy lifestyles. Sporting activities are popular, and their travel plan is well developed and encourages pupils to be fit and healthy.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is outstanding. Pupils work hard to make the school a better place. Road safety officers, and peer mentors help to keep pupils safe, and care of the environment is achieved through recycling. The school council performed a play to show the problems that come from bullying, and explained what to do if they have any concerns. Considerable funds are raised for local and national charities chosen by the school council, including the Catholic charity of CAFOD and, most recently, the NSPCC. Also, funds were raised for the refurbishment of the swimming pool. Pupils are thrilled about this and commented, 'We're very lucky to have a swimming pool in the middle of our school.' The excellent personal qualities of pupils, along with the good progress they make in their basic skills, prepare them very well for their later life and learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Although teaching is good overall, there is a significant proportion of outstanding teaching across the school, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Year 6. Specialist teachers use their expertise very well to extend learning, for example when teaching drama, music or swimming. Most lessons are well planned with good opportunities for pupils to build on what they have learnt before. Teachers have good subject knowledge and make sure that pupils know what they are learning very clearly. In the best lessons, there is a good pace, and teachers have high expectations and challenge pupils very well. Interactive whiteboards and other teaching tools are used very effectively so that pupils are highly engaged in their learning. Where teaching is less successful, introductions are too long and there is not enough opportunity for pupils to apply themselves in practical activities. There are inconsistencies in teacher expectations about the presentation of pupils' work and in handwriting. Monitoring of teaching has shown that teachers are becoming more skilled at giving guidance to pupils, through discussion and in their marking. Teaching assistants are mostly employed well to support pupils with learning difficulties and those speaking English and additional language, and this enables them to make good progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is structured to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding through an imaginative and creative series of topics, which are very well enriched and are chosen to interest and motivate pupils. Wider world issues and understanding of different faiths and cultures are incorporated very successfully in special focus weeks. For example, a well-planned study about Pakistan and of the Muslim faith helped pupils to have a better understanding of the values and beliefs of others, and supported them in their relationships with a local school. A significant number of visits and visitors enhance learning experiences, as well as the wide range of out-of-school clubs, although these are only for older pupils. There are some good links across subjects to promote the development of the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and information communication technology. However, in some subjects, such as history and geography, worksheets are sometimes used which are not matched sufficiently to pupils' abilities, and do not provide enough challenge. Personal, social and health education is well planned, and has a strong focus on personal safety.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pastoral care and support are outstanding. Staff know pupils' needs well and have established excellent relationships with them. Systems of health and safety, risk assessment, first aid and child protection are fully in place, and there is rigorous monitoring of attendance and punctuality. In a recent audit, the school recognised that play facilities for younger pupils are in need of development. Assessment systems are good overall, although not yet fully consistent across all year groups to give greater detail about pupils' progress term by term. Outside agencies are used very regularly to support pupils with specific needs. Links with parents are very successful in promoting learning opportunities at home.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Under the guidance of an experienced headteacher, the school is a happy and friendly place, where every child is a valued member of the school community. Parents, staff and governors are very appreciative of the headteacher's excellent skills in developing an ethos which promotes the Catholic faith and ensures a high quality of care and academic achievement. In conjunction with the headteacher, a strong and collegiate team of deputy headteacher and staff sets challenging targets for improvement. Self-review takes place regularly, and leaders and managers at all levels are becoming more involved, although some roles are still at an early stage of development. They are more involved in tracking pupils' progress and identifying strengths and weakness in subject performance. Governors have good involvement in strategic planning and in promoting outstanding community cohesion. The school has an extensive role in further training for students and teachers in the locality. Financial procedures are good and monies are targeted prudently to facilitate good overall provision for all pupils.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ 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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
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 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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
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

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

01 April 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Hornchurch, RM12 4TL

You may recall that three inspectors visited your school recently. Thank you for being so friendly and welcoming. We can understand why you enjoy your school so much. The school council gave an excellent presentation about all the exciting things you are doing. You have a good school and one that is improving all the time.

Here are the things that are best about your school.

- You are friendly and very welcoming.
- You work hard in lessons and achieve well.
- You have an excellent understanding of the importance of eating healthily and taking exercise. It was good to see how well you are achieving in swimming and games activities.
- Visits out of school, such as to the Imperial War Museum and Houses of Parliament, sound very exciting!
- You are making excellent contributions in support of others in school, the church, the community and in Africa.
- Your parents and carers are very glad that you go to this school.
- Your headteacher, staff and governors are working hard to make your school even better.

There are three things that we would like your school to do to improve.

- You should improve your handwriting and presentation skills.
- Your teachers should improve the range of activities for break and lunchtimes for Years 1 and 2, by providing better facilities and more equipment.
- Adults with special responsibilities could help more with improving your school.

We hope that you carry on enjoying the many interesting things provided for you at St Mary's.

Yours faithfully

Bernice Magson

Lead Inspector