

St Mary's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102425
Local Authority	Hillingdon
Inspection number	323641
Inspection date	6 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Derek Watts

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	221
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	59
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Maureen Thorpe
Headteacher	Miss Ann Shevlin
Date of previous school inspection	20 October 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Rockingham Close Uxbridge UB8 2UA
Telephone number	01895 232814
Fax number	01895 235403

Age group	3–11
Inspection date	6 November 2008
Inspection number	323641

© Crown copyright 2008

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 two Additional Inspectors.

The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated:

- how well the school is improving provision and pupils' performance in mathematics, particularly for the more able
- the effectiveness of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and how well children are progressing.

Evidence was gathered from lesson observations and a scrutiny of pupils' work and school documentation. Parents' questionnaires and discussions with pupils, governors and staff also contributed to the judgements. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

St Mary's Catholic Primary School is a slightly smaller than average primary school. About half of the pupil population is from a white British background. The remainder come from a wide range of other ethnic backgrounds with Irish and Black African being significant groups. About one fifth of pupils speak English as an additional language and an increasing number join the school at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. These difficulties lie mainly in the areas of speech, language and communication. The proportion of pupils who join and leave the school other than at the normal starting and leaving points is higher than is normally found. There is Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision for children in Nursery and Reception. The school works in partnership with a private company who provide before and after school care.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

St Mary's Catholic Primary School is a good school. There are outstanding aspects to its work. Children get off to a first rate start in the EYFS and make outstanding progress. Pupils achieve well in the rest of the school because of good teaching and a well planned curriculum. Across the school, excellent care guidance and support, and a very positive school atmosphere lead to outstanding personal development and well-being for pupils.

Children often begin school with knowledge and skills below those expected for their age. By the end of the Reception Year they reach a level of development expected for their age. Standards by the end of Year 2 are above average in reading and writing but average in mathematics. By the end of Year 6 standards are above average in English and science but closer to average in mathematics. Not enough pupils attain the higher levels in mathematics. Occasionally, in this subject more able pupils spend time in lessons doing similar work to the others rather than tackling more challenging and demanding work from the outset. This has been identified by the school as a pressing improvement priority. Investigative and problem solving work is being increased but this action is too recent to have had a full impact on achievement and standards. The higher than usual proportion of pupils leaving and joining the school has an adverse impact on overall standards. However, pupils make good progress from their various starting points, particularly those at an early stage of learning English.

Pupils make good progress because of the good teaching they receive. There are some outstanding elements to practice. Across the school, teachers have excellent relationships with their pupils. Pupils are enthusiastic and respond exceptionally well to the high expectations of behaviour and learning. The purpose of the lessons is made clear so pupils know what they are expected to learn. Teachers' clear instructions and demonstrations promote learning well. Questioning is used skilfully to challenge the pupils' thinking and check their understanding. In most lessons, teachers use assessment information well to match activities and tasks to pupils' abilities and needs. As a result, pupils are challenged well and make good gains in their learning. Pupils work hard and take considerable care and pride in their written presentation. Teaching assistants are well deployed. They make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning, particularly those who need additional support with English language or numeracy.

The curriculum promotes good progress for pupils and makes an excellent contribution to their personal development. There is good emphasis on the development of language, literacy and scientific skills. Additional activities such as clubs, visitors and trips are much appreciated by the parents and enjoyed by the pupils. Popular clubs include art, football, netball, martial arts and tag rugby. A summer residential visit to an outdoor pursuits centre is planned for Year 6. Health and safety education are promoted very well across the curriculum. Since the last inspection there have been significant improvements to the accommodation, with a new entrance, new classroom, a 30 station computer suite and a refurbished hall. Pupils use information and communication technology (ICT) well to support their learning, and the improved hall extends opportunities for drama.

Good leadership and management are key factors contributing to the school's success and the good improvements made since the last inspection. The headteacher provides very good leadership and direction. With her staff, she has successfully created a very positive climate for pupils to learn and staff to work. She receives good support from other senior leaders. Leaders and managers are extremely well focused on raising achievement and providing high quality

provision. Performance is systematically reviewed and the findings are used effectively to bring about improvements. However, the school is not complacent and leaders are aware of the need to improve performance in mathematics. Teamwork among the staff is strong and this has enabled new teachers to settle in extremely well. Governors possess a good understanding of the school's performance. They offer constructive challenge, good support and contribute well to the school's development.

Parents hold very positive views about the school and most are extremely pleased with both the care and education provided for their children. Pupils' progress, the school's atmosphere, staff approachability, the care provided and the leadership of the headteacher and deputy headteacher receive particular praise. Typical comments from the parents' questionnaires included: 'my child has had many happy years at St Mary's and has made very good progress', 'teachers are very supportive and caring' and the school provides a 'positive and supportive ethos'. Community cohesion is promoted well. Parents welcome the extended before and after school provision. There are good links with the Catholic Church and other community organisations. All pupils and members of the school are valued in this positive and inclusive school community.

Pupils feel very safe and extremely well looked after in school because of the highly effective systems to safeguard them. Systems to assess and monitor individual's academic performance are good. Pupils are set specific learning targets in English and mathematics so know what they are working on to improve. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils have a particularly good understanding of different cultures and traditions through initiatives such as 'One World Week' and the diverse range of visitors. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and this is reflected by their above average attendance and their keen participation in activities. Effective action has been taken to improve attendance. Pupils' behaviour is exceptionally good because of the high expectations of all staff and the strong relationships between adults and pupils. Pupils adopt healthy lifestyles and show an excellent understanding of the importance of healthy eating, exercising regularly and keeping safe. They thrive on the additional responsibilities. Those on the school council, prefects and play leaders all take their responsibilities seriously. Pupils raise funds for a variety of national and global charities. At St Mary's, pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education. By the time they leave, they have good literacy and sound numeracy skills. In addition to these, their personal and social skills are exceptionally well developed.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children enter the Nursery with the knowledge and skills below those expected for their age. Language and social skills of some children are limited when they start. Children settle quickly and enjoy their learning because of the school's successful induction arrangements and effective communication with parents. Exceptional welfare provision and high quality relationships lead to outstanding personal and social development for children. Highly effective leadership, strong teamwork among the staff, exceptional teaching and an exciting range of activities enable all children to make outstanding progress in all areas of learning. Staff know the children's needs very well and possess considerable expertise in how children of this age learn. The planning of the EYFS curriculum is outstanding. The development of language skills is given high priority and pervades all activities. High quality learning resources and outdoor learning facilities are used extremely well to motivate and stimulate the children. Staff provide an effective blend of activities led by adults alongside those enabling children to explore, be creative and work

independently. By the end of Reception, children possess knowledge and skills that are above those expected for their age. They are extremely well prepared for the next steps of their education.

What the school should do to improve further

* Raise achievement and standards in mathematics, particularly for the more able.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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?	2
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?	1

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	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 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?	1

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	1
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?	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

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

20 November 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Uxbridge, UB8 2UA

Thank you so much for welcoming us into your school and showing us your work. We enjoyed our visit and would like to tell you what we found. Yours is a good school. It has some outstanding features. You can all be very proud of your school.

These are the main strengths of the school:

- children in the Nursery and Reception get off to a fantastic start
- you thoroughly enjoy school and your attendance is good
- teaching is good, which is why you are learning so well
- a good range of learning activities, clubs, trips and visitors are provided
- behaviour is outstanding in lessons and around the school
- you have an excellent understanding of how to keep healthy and safe
- you show a particularly good understanding of different cultures and traditions
- all staff take excellent care of you and give you very good support
- you make excellent contributions to the school and the wider community
- the school is very well led by your headteacher and she receives good support from other senior staff.

There is one area the school has been asked to look at to make it even better:

- some of you, particularly the more able, could do better in mathematics and reach higher standards.

You can help by continuing to work hard, particularly in mathematics.

Finally, thank you once again for all your help. Keep up the good work. We wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Derek Watts

Lead Inspector