

# St Mary's CofE Junior School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	125194
<b>Local Authority</b>	Surrey
<b>Inspection number</b>	328312
<b>Inspection dates</b>	24–25 June 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	George Rayner

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>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	357
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Eileen Perryer
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Alan Norgrove
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	5 July 2006
<b>School address</b>	Silkham Road Oxted RH8 ONP
<b>Telephone number</b>	01883 712 817
<b>Fax number</b>	01883 723 554

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This school is larger than most primary schools. The great majority of pupils have White British heritage. A very small proportion of the pupils are entitled to free school meals. No pupils are at an early stage of learning to speak English. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average. These pupils have a range of problems that make it difficult for them to learn at the same rate as their classmates, with the largest single group being those with dyslexia.

## 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. The great majority of parents agree. They say that their children are very happy here and that they make good progress. The comment of one parent typified the views of many, 'Due to good teaching and a high standard of education my child has gained in confidence both socially and academically'. A major strength is pupils' outstanding personal development and well-being. Pupils are highly enthusiastic about school and thoroughly enjoy coming here. They show this through their excellent attendance, with an extremely low level of persistent absence, exemplary behaviour and eagerness to join in with all that the school offers. Pupils are exceptionally cooperative, eager to do well and proud of the school and their own achievements. Pupils know that the adults care for them very well. They contribute to their own care in an outstanding manner. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to live healthily, keep themselves safe and be considerate of others.

Good teaching and learning, together with a good curriculum, help pupils to achieve well and reach standards that overall are well above average by the end of Year 6. This has been the case for some years in English and mathematics. At the time of the last inspection, progress and attainment were noticeably weaker in science. Leaders have taken resolute and effective action to raise science standards, so that they have now almost caught up with those in the other two subjects. This has been accomplished by increasing the time allocation for science and ensuring that this is used effectively. Leaders are now turning their attention to improving pupils' opportunities to develop and use their information and communication technology (ICT) skills. This is because they know that, while pupils develop good ICT skills, they only have limited opportunities to use these creatively to enhance their work in other subjects. One reason is that not all teachers are fully proficient and confident in all areas of ICT, so do not use it to its full capability. Improvement plans include training to tackle this.

Staff contribute to pupils' progress by giving them good guidance and support. This is not fully consistent however. Systems for tracking progress and giving extra support to pupils who need this are not easily accessible to all staff who need to refer to these. This means that they are not always used as speedily as they could be.

Leadership and management are good. Senior leaders provide a clear vision for the school as one where pupils make good progress and, equally important, are happy. The headteacher commands tremendous respect from the pupils and adults who work in the school and from most parents. He has played a commendable role in ensuring that the school is a happy, secure environment in which children can learn and develop and also that it stands at the heart of the local community. Self-evaluation has given the leaders an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas needing further improvement. Since the previous inspection, well-considered strategies have brought important improvements in teaching and learning that have raised pupils' standards. The track record demonstrates a good capacity to improve further.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Speedily implement plans to develop teachers' ICT expertise, to improve pupils' opportunities to use computers to enhance their work across the curriculum.
- Improve and make more accessible the systems for staff to track pupils' progress in order to identify and help those falling behind more quickly.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

There is considerable variation in the standards of individual pupils when they arrive, but overall these are slightly above average. Pupils achieve well and their standards in English, mathematics and science are well above average by the end of Year 6. In writing, pupils develop their ideas very well and use a range of styles, such as poetry, discussions and newspaper reports. They use their good mathematical skills very proficiently to solve problems. Until recently, pupils' standards in science were considerably lower, because they were weak in finding things out for themselves through investigations. Following improvements to the science curriculum, pupils have strongly improved this aspect of their work, so that their science standards are now also beginning to reach well above average levels. The needs of the pupils who find it difficult to learn at the same rate as others are carefully identified and effectively met. As a result they make as much progress as their classmates.

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

### **Grade: 1**

Parents are delighted by their children's development. One commented that, 'Children are polite and confident and are encouraged to be independent with good social values'. Pupils have an excellent awareness of the importance of a balanced diet and lead very active lives. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is highly developed, evident in the ease with which the pupils engage in discussions and teamwork. Links with the local church contribute to pupils' excellent spiritual development. Pupils develop very good social skills. They are extremely well-mannered while at the same time being friendly and relaxed. Pupils willingly reach out to the wider community through music and sport. They are very involved in charitable fundraising, often initiating their own collections because, as one pupil said, 'Other people are not as lucky as us'. Pupils diligently take on a variety of responsibilities and school councillors take their roles very seriously. They say their ideas are listened to and feel they have been involved in changes in uniform, more vegetables for meals and improvements to the computer suite. Pupils' progress in their learning, together with the personal qualities that they develop, help to prepare them very well for their future lives.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teachers plan exciting and varied activities that the pupils really enjoy. They set clear expectations for effort and behaviour, in an encouraging way that praises pupils when they meet these expectations. As a result, relationships are very good and pupils are very enthusiastic learners. This ensures that activities move along briskly. This was seen in a Year 3 mathematics lesson where pupils had to move around the room to carry out a series of tasks. They did this very speedily, each time being quickly ready for their next task. Teachers plan well to ensure that, while tasks are manageable for all pupils, they provide enough challenge for the most able ones. Teachers question pupils well, really making them think, for example when they ask pupils to estimate how much liquid will fit into a container, then think of ways to find out how accurate they were. Effective teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants ensures that any pupils finding their work particularly difficult quickly receive the help that they need to

keep up with the pace of work. Occasionally, this is less effective when teachers do not move around the classroom to check that all pupils are coping with their work. Teachers use marking well to encourage pupils and show them what they have done well. Sometimes, although not always, marking gives pupils helpful guidance on how to improve their work.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum promotes good progress in literacy and numeracy and increasingly for science. This follows improvements to the science curriculum, with additional time being used effectively for more opportunities for pupils to develop their investigative skills. The school has an effective focus on making education a truly enjoyable experience for pupils, through a vibrant curriculum. This includes access to a good variety of well-planned activities in addition to the basic curriculum, including French, swimming and music. Many benefit from specialist teaching and some from partnerships with the local secondary school. The response of different groups of learners to the curriculum is carefully monitored. This has led to the introduction of practical skills groups, which benefit pupils who find it difficult to learn mathematics. Pupils are enthusiastic about the school's provision of extra-curricular activities and participate eagerly in a variety of sports, cultural, and creative clubs. Pupils also say how much they enjoy trips, visits, and visitors such as authors. The curriculum has a very good impact on the pupils' understanding of healthy lifestyles and the need for exercise and good eating habits. Leaders recognise that activities for pupils to use and develop their computer skills to enhance their work in other subjects are limited. Plans are in hand to improve these.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Pastoral care is extremely good. Procedures for safeguarding, child protection and eliminating discrimination meet current requirements very effectively. Pupils speak highly of the support they receive, feel safe, and know who to go to if they have concerns. Potential risks are clearly recognised and minimised, for example by ensuring that all in the school know important procedures such as fire evacuation and that accidents and incidents are carefully recorded and efficiently dealt with. Pupils are well supported by the strong links with local schools, particularly when they transfer into Year 3 and when they leave for secondary school. Pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress as a result of the effective additional support from the school and external agencies where necessary. Systems for tracking pupils' progress are generally effective. Nevertheless, they are not always easily accessible to those who need to use them to check each pupil's progress and quickly help those falling behind what is expected of them. Leaders are aware of this and plans are in hand to make improvements.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

There is considerable unity of purpose shared by all adults who contribute to the school's work. A major strength is the quality of teamwork between capable staff, working at all levels of leadership. The leaders have a good understanding of the improvement priorities for their areas and show considerable energy in pursuing these. Since the last inspection, the contribution of subject leaders has improved. Particularly in English and mathematics and increasingly in science, leaders are well involved in monitoring the quality of teaching and advising colleagues on how

to improve this. Those in the school know that these strengths are not yet consistently present in the leadership of some other subjects, particularly ICT. Plans are in hand to tackle this soon. The knowledgeable governors balance very well their supporting and critical roles. They have played a full role in asking the questions that have shown the way in the school's successful drive for improvement. Leaders have successfully evaluated the school's contribution to community cohesion, which is good. They provide many opportunities for pupils to develop an awareness of diversity, culture and ethnicity, particularly on a local level. Plans are in hand to make this equally effective on a national scale.

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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 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/or disabilities make progress	2

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<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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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	2

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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

<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	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?	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**

08 July 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Mary's CofE Junior School, Oxted, RH8 0NP

Thank you for welcoming the inspectors to your school recently. We enjoyed meeting you. We are grateful for the help you gave by talking to us and showing us your work. We were able to see that yours is a good school.

Your standards are a little above average when you come to the school. You make good progress, so that your standards at the end of Year 6 are well above those we see in most schools. We enjoyed reading some of the really interesting things that you have written in your literacy books and can see that you are really good at working things out in mathematics. Standards in science have not been so good in the past. The adults know this and have improved the way that they teach you this subject. This and your own hard work have really helped you to catch up in science.

The adults are really proud of you. They told us that one of the best things about your school is the way that you are growing up. We could see that this is true. You show this by only missing school rarely, your excellent behaviour, cheerfulness and willingness to join in with all the things that the adults plan for you. This makes it really worthwhile for them and is an important reason why you do so well.

We have asked the adults to do two things:

- quickly implement plans that they have to give you more chances to use computers in other subjects;
- make sure that all staff can quickly find out how well each one of you is doing, so that they can quickly give you extra help if you need it.

Your headteacher and the other adults really know how to make your school even better. They are continuing to work hard to do this. We know that you will also continue to help. Well done to you all and very best wishes for the future.

Yours faithfully

George Rayner

Lead Inspector