

St Mary's Hare Park School

Independent School

Inspection Report

DCSF Registration Number	311/6054
Early Years Registration Number	518290
Unique Reference Number	102357
Inspection number	329559
Inspection dates	18 September 2008
Reporting inspector	Stephen Dennett

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002 (as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005).

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, in order to advise the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

This was a light touch inspection (LTI) which focussed principally on the quality of education provided by the school; its provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; the arrangements for safeguarding pupils and the improvements the school has made since its last inspection.

Information about the school

St Mary's Hare Park is an independent Roman Catholic primary school for boys and girls from two and a half to 11 years of age. The school was first opened in 1926 as Hare Park School and moved to its present premises in 1935 in Gidea Park, Romford. It was bought by the Sisters of Mercy in 1964 and, on the withdrawal of the Order in 1988, became a non-profit charitable trust. There are 144 full-time pupils and 11 part-time children in the Nursery. No children have funded nursery places. Pupils transfer to a number of state and independent secondary schools at the age of 11. The school was last inspected in December 2004.

As a Catholic and Christian community, the school aims to develop respect and individuality in a caring and safe environment and ensure that all pupils reach their full potential.

Evaluation of the school

St Mary's Hare Park School offers an outstanding quality of education for its pupils. The inspirational headteacher has created a caring, yet challenging, place to learn. The quality of teaching is consistently good, and is outstanding in places. Pupils thrive tremendously in this school and achieve exceptionally well. Both parents and pupils rightly express their high level of satisfaction with the school. There are significant strengths in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision which is also outstanding; it is well led and provides an excellent start to school, especially in the Nursery. The school has made good progress in addressing the issues raised at the time of the last inspection and the school now meets fully all the regulations.

Quality of education

The curriculum is outstanding and supports pupils' academic, physical, social and spiritual development particularly well. There is a well-written policy, which covers all subjects of the National Curriculum, religious education (RE) and French. It is implemented very well, enabling pupils to make exceptional progress in literacy and numeracy. The organisation of the curriculum for the EYFS is outstanding, and this enables children to make excellent progress. However, children in the class

which contains four year olds (the 'reception' class) and the class for rising fives (the 'transition' class) do not have ready access to the outdoor area, so curricular provision is good overall.

There is a very good range of extra-curricular activities, both before and after school, which supports pupils' learning effectively. The curriculum is enhanced by a wide range of educational visits and by visitors, who bring a large number of interesting and engaging presentations to widen pupils' understanding of the world. The school rightly prides itself on its highly professional productions, such as the 'Pirates of Penzance', which are well received by the parents and the community at large. A significant proportion of pupils receive instrumental lessons and the school orchestra performs to a high standard when accompanying the singing in assembly, for example.

The RE curriculum and assemblies make an outstanding contribution to pupils' personal, social and health education (PSHE), as well as their spiritual and moral development. Science and physical education (PE) also contribute effectively to their knowledge of healthy eating and exercise. Sex education is taught effectively through science and RE. There are detailed schemes of work for all subjects taught in the school, which are translated into effective plans for each term. Plans provide teachers with clear guidance on the material to be covered in each class and are used to good effect.

Overall, teaching is good, but is outstanding in upper Key Stage 2, where pupils' progress accelerates markedly and results in exceptional achievement. Learning support assistants provide outstanding support for pupils with learning difficulties, by taking groups and giving them tasks well matched to their needs. They also hear reading, which results in pupils making outstanding progress in this aspect of their learning. An outstanding feature of teaching is the very positive relationships which exist between pupils and staff. Teachers use appropriate rewards, such as 'house points' to encourage pupils to do their best. Lessons are challenging and teachers have high expectations of pupils' achievement. In the best lessons, outstanding use is made of questioning to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding of the subject being taught. Very effective use is made of specialist teaching for music, drama, ICT, French and PE. Teaching is good in the EYFS overall and outstanding in the Nursery. Teachers successfully create a caring environment in which young children thrive.

Assessment systems are good throughout the school, including the EYFS, and effective use is made of the information to set challenging targets for improvement. As most pupils sit the Eleven Plus (11+) examinations in November, the school is currently providing expert tuition to furnish pupils with the skills they need to give a good account of their abilities in the tests. Teachers keep good records of pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics using tests devised by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER). These NFER test results are used effectively to track pupils' progress as they move through Key Stage 2. In order to improve staff's knowledge of National Curriculum levels and to ensure all work is well matched to pupils' abilities, the school is building up a portfolio of pupils' work which is levelled. Assessment was not judged to be outstanding because marking does not

always inform pupils about what they need to do to improve their work. Pupils are also not involved sufficiently in assessing their own and their peers' work and in suggesting ways in which they could improve.

Children make outstanding progress in the EYFS and all meet, and indeed most exceed, the Early Learning Goals by the time they enter Year 1. As a result of the outstanding curriculum and good teaching in the main school, pupils achieve high standards in reading and writing from Year 1. This outstanding progress continues through both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. The school has improved provision in English and there are now good opportunities for pupils to write at length in upper Key Stage 2 and they, consequently, achieve very high standards. In mathematics, the strong emphasis on arithmetic enables pupils to achieve very high standards at both key stages. Again, improvements have been made in the subject and there are now good opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical skills practically and to investigate patterns in number. Pupils make good use of ICT skills to support their learning in many subjects and they achieve standards above those usually expected.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Children's personal, social and emotional development in the EYFS is also outstanding. There is a strong Christian ethos that emphasises consideration for others, which is demonstrated by pupils as they go about the school. Pupils pray and take part in assemblies by playing instruments, singing and answering questions. Pupils are polite, outstandingly well behaved and take their work seriously. Pupils' contribution to the life of the school is outstanding. Older pupils undertake a range of responsibilities around the school, such as helping younger children up the stairs and being playground 'buddies'. They take these responsibilities seriously and fulfil them conscientiously. Pupils have a clear sense of right and wrong, and explore a wide range of moral and social issues in RE, geography and PSHE lessons. They are well aware of health issues and care for the environment. Pupils clearly enjoy their school and are keen to be there. As a consequence, attendance is good.

Pupils have a good understanding of the main institutions and services in England, and are developing their role as future citizens through the PSHE programme. Older pupils are very well prepared for their future well-being by having very good mental arithmetic skills, which they apply effectively to 'real life' situations, such as currency conversion. Pupils feel very well prepared for the next phase of their education and future life. 'I feel very positive about the future' said one boy in Year 6. The newly-formed school council also provides pupils with the opportunity to exercise the responsibility of representing others on a committee. Provision for pupils' cultural development is very good. The RE curriculum covers the cultural aspects of several major world religions and pupils have a good working knowledge of Islam, Hinduism and Judaism. The school is a multicultural environment and pupils share their faith and cultural differences with the school. This adds appreciably to pupils' understanding of the multicultural nature of modern Britain.

Safeguarding pupils' welfare, health and safety

The school has outstanding procedures for ensuring that all pupils, including children in the EYFS, are safe, secure and healthy. Pupils show a good awareness of how to stay safe indoors and outdoors. They are encouraged to eat healthily by choosing between milk and water at break time and eating fruit. Standards of welfare are outstanding and the care taken by the school is outstanding. All the necessary policies and systems for ensuring pupils' welfare, health and safety are in place. There are robust procedures for recruiting staff and safeguarding pupils, which comply with the latest guidance. There is a single central register that records all the necessary checks have been carried out. The school has very good links with the local authority and outside agencies for child protection. All procedures are in place and all staff are well aware of child protection issues. Staff are well aware of health and safety matters and ensure that pupils work safely in PE and other lessons with possible hazards. Risk assessments are carried out carefully, including detailed fire risk assessments and checks. All fire-fighting and detecting equipment has been serviced recently and fit for purpose. The school has a good disability access plan which meets all the requirements under the Disability Discrimination Act 2002.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make outstanding progress in relation to their starting points and capabilities because the management and leadership of the provision are outstanding. Provision for children under three is outstanding and meets all requirements. Staff work as a strong team and have established a culture of continuous improvement. The high staff-to-children ratio and the use of careful ongoing assessments enable staff to meet each child's needs closely. A wide range of resources is provided to stimulate learning in each area of the curriculum. However, the premises put constraints on access to the outdoor area for children in the 'reception' class. The school has plans in hand to address the issue and staff do their best to minimise the effect of this limitation on pupils' learning.

By the end of the 'transition' class, most children attain standards that are consistently well beyond expectations in each of the six areas of learning. Children also make outstanding progress in their personal development. They show concentration and perseverance in their learning and they respect their environment. Children behave well, work and play harmoniously together, developing good teamwork and problem solving skills. They show a good awareness of how to stay safe indoors and outdoors. Children are encouraged to eat healthily by choosing between milk and water at break time and eating fruit.

The school's provision for their welfare, health and safety is outstanding. There is a sufficient number of staff with paediatric first aid qualifications. The school works in close partnership with parents to ensure that children are well cared for.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended January 2005.

What the school could do to improve further

While not required by the regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- further develop the use of marking as a tool to inform pupils what they need to do to improve their work
- provide more opportunities for pupils to assess their own work and the work of their peers
- improve access to the outdoor area for children in the 'reception' and 'transition' classes.

Inspection Judgement Recording Form

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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The quality of education

Overall quality of education	✓			
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils	✓			
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs		✓		
How well pupils make progress in their learning	✓			

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	✓			
The behaviour of pupils	✓			

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils	✓			
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The quality of the Early Years Foundation Stage provision

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?		✓		
How well do children achieve in the Early Years Foundation Stage relative to their starting points and capabilities?	✓			
How good are the personal development and well-being of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	✓			
What is the quality of welfare, health and safety of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	✓			
How effectively is the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	✓			
What is the overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage including, where relevant, the quality of childcare?	✓			

School details

Name of school	St Mary's Hare Park School		
DCSF number	311/6054		
Unique reference number	102357		
EY URN (for registered childcare only)	EY518290		
Type of school	Primary and Nursery		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	1935		
Age range of pupils	2-11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 70	Girls: 74	Total: 144
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 6	Girls: 5	Total: 11
Annual fees (day pupils)	£ 1,765 – 1,985		
Address of school	South Drive Gidea Park Romford Essex RM2 6HH		
Telephone number	01708 761220		
Fax number	01708 761220		
Email address	harepark@btconnect.com		
Headteacher	Mrs K Karwacinski		
Proprietor	Mrs Glenda Spencer St Mary's Hare Park Trust		
Reporting inspector	Stephen Dennett		
Dates of inspection	18 September 2008		