

St Mary's C of E Primary School, Yate

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109264
Local Authority	South Gloucestershire
Inspection number	337254
Inspection dates	3–4 December 2009
Reporting inspector	Joyce Cox

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	310
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Reverend David Harrex
Headteacher	Mary Baskerville
Date of previous school inspection	8 January 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 14 lessons and held meetings with the chair of governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at documentation relating to self-evaluation, the tracking of pupils' progress and the safeguarding of pupils. They analysed the responses of 100 parental questionnaires, 27 staff questionnaires and 242 pupil questionnaires. They also spoke to some parents in the playground.

Inspectors looked at pupils' work, the latest school improvement partner's monitoring report and the school improvement plan.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- what the school is doing to raise the attainment of the more able pupils and lower attainers in mathematics in Key Stage 2
- how successfully staff use assessment data to plan the next steps in pupils' learning
- the extent and impact of subject leaders' and the governing body's involvement on whole-school improvement.

Information about the school

St Mary's is a larger-than-average-sized primary school. The school takes 45 pupils per year so most classes are of mixed age. A very small number of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds. The majority of pupils speak English as their first language. The number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average. The main areas of need are speech and communication and specific learning difficulties.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in two Reception classes.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

St Mary's is a good school. Strong Christian principles lie at the heart of the school's work and are the basis of the good care, guidance and support provided for all pupils. Consequently, pupils, including the most vulnerable, enjoy school, make good progress and feel secure. Good attention is paid to keeping pupils healthy, safe and free from harm at all times. Pupils enjoy school, are keen and hard working in lessons and their attendance is good. They like their teachers and also enjoy the many after-school clubs and residential visits. Following recent changes to lunchtime procedures the school council is reviewing arrangements to ensure that children enjoy their lunchtimes as much as they used to.

Teaching is good and staff take great care to meet the needs of the different ages and abilities in each class. Teachers are skilled at making sure that pupils are clear about how they should carry out their tasks and what they are expected to achieve. This, together with pupils' enthusiasm for school, helps them to make good progress, and standards are above average by the time they leave in Year 6.

The school is very thorough in evaluating how well its provision supports pupils' progress, adjusting it effectively to target weaker areas. Good curriculum developments recently have seen the introduction of activities which engage and motivate all groups of pupils so that everyone achieves equally well. However, while all pupils are enjoying this new curriculum, their work is not sufficiently displayed or celebrated throughout the school, and so opportunities are missed to consolidate pupils' learning in this way. Many staff make visits abroad as part of the school's extended links, but there is very little evidence of the impact of this work, including in displays on the walls for pupils, parents and visitors to enjoy. A few parents feel that communication between themselves and senior leaders is not as good as it should be. This was the case at the time of the last inspection and the school is fully aware of the need to improve in this respect, including increasing the governors' engagement with parents.

The headteacher has a good understanding of where the school needs to improve, which is effectively shared with staff and governors. Together they are driving improvement forward well. They work closely with other schools and agencies to enhance pupils' learning and welfare and to ensure that the needs of individual pupils are effectively met. Accurate self-evaluation results in development planning being effectively targeted at weaker areas of the school's work. This, coupled with considerable improvement to Key Stage 1 pupils' attainment and achievement since the last inspection, means the school is well placed to improve further.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers by:
 - updating the school's website so parents can access information such as newsletters more quickly
 - extending the governing body's role in addressing parents' concerns and queries
 - ensuring the leadership team take every opportunity to be visible and welcoming to parents.
- Improve the effectiveness of curricular provision by:
 - celebrating pupils' achievements and consolidating their learning in high quality cross-curricular displays.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils' enthusiasm for school significantly supports their good behaviour and attitudes to learning. Reception children enter with skills and knowledge in line with typical age-related expectations. Their good progress results in standards being slightly above average by the time they move into Year 1. Progress for all groups of pupils in Years 1 to 6, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, is good, as shown in lessons, pupils' books and from the tracking of achievement.

Good improvements have been made, since the last inspection, to ensure Key Stage 1 pupils achieve well. Year 6 pupils' current attainment is above average in science and mathematics and well above in English. Good measures are in place to ensure that the attainment of the most able and lower-attaining pupils in mathematics improves in Key Stage 2 following the slight dip seen in standards for these groups in the Year 6 2009 tests. All pupils build knowledge and skills effectively because lessons are productive and purposeful. They are eager to learn and enjoy working with and supporting each other. They learn effectively and say they enjoy their lessons because teachers make learning fun and interesting. They respond very well to praise and listen carefully. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support from teachers and teaching assistants. Work is skilfully adapted to meet their specific needs so that they make good progress. Pupils are aware of what safety means in their own lives, especially with regards to using the internet, mobile phones and games consoles sensibly. They know how to eat healthily and enjoy the many opportunities for sport. Pupils' good behaviour and smiling faces create a welcoming environment. They enjoy raising money for various charities and conscientiously undertake their roles as school councillors and assembly monitors. Good links with schools at home and abroad result in pupils having a good knowledge of other cultures. Pupils' good academic progress and personal qualities prepare them well for later life.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching methods are normally chosen well to motivate pupils, and teachers ensure good behaviour through establishing clear routines. Most teachers make sure activities are brisk and focused so that no time is wasted. On rare occasions pupils are kept sitting, listening to the teacher for too long and become restless. Some aspects of assessment are working well. Pupils know and use their individual literacy and numeracy targets. Some teachers use questions effectively as a means to establish how well individual pupils and groups understand their learning. Pupils are often given useful success criteria, so that they have something specific to aim for, and they can give teachers clear feedback on whether they have understood. Teaching assistants play an effective part in lessons, often teaching the lesson's content at an adapted level to small groups of lower-attaining pupils. The key to the good progress that the most vulnerable pupils make in the school is the good care, support and guidance they get and the security this gives them.

The curriculum is good and effective links between different subjects are evolving. For example Year 5 and 6 pupils are currently enjoying an exciting project about 'Heroes' and confidently describe war and scientific heroes. They are making interesting computer presentations about their own heroes, including the missionary Gladys Aylward. The curriculum is planned carefully to meet the needs and aspirations of all the pupils. However, pupils' good work in lessons is not sufficiently celebrated and displayed

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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in classrooms or around the school, and as a result opportunities are missed to reinforce pupils' learning in this way, particularly in terms of raising their awareness of the links between subjects. Good provision is made for the development of pupils' basic skills. Most staff use computer technology well to enliven lessons. Pupils of all backgrounds take advantage of the wide range of extra activities the school offers. Horizons are broadened and expectations raised by many trips, visitors and residential visits. Year 6 pupils say they especially enjoyed a week at Barton Hall in Torquay, where they experienced an indoor activity zone, a heated outdoor swimming pool and science and computer activities.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

An ambitious vision is embedded well among the staff and governors and the drive for improvement is good. All staff and governors are involved in development planning and this gives a strong sense of shared ownership of the school's priorities. There is a clear focus on monitoring the quality of teaching, with subject leaders, senior staff and governors being increasingly involved in the process. The effect of their work is evident in the improved provision in Key Stage 1.

A strong emphasis is placed on child protection and all staff have received relevant training. At the time of the inspection, safeguarding procedures were robust and met all statutory requirements. The promotion of equality of opportunity for all pupils is good and rigorous procedures ensure that no pupil is discriminated against.

Governors now play an active role in school life as they are well informed and knowledgeable. However, governors are not always sufficiently involved in assisting the school in fostering good partnerships with all parents. Effective partnerships with other schools and agencies enhance pupils' experiences, for example in sport.

A satisfactory partnership exists between parents and the school. This was the case at the time of the last inspection. A parents' forum consisting of the headteacher, parent governors, the 'Friends Association' and interested parents has been set up.

Nevertheless, a small number of parents are still unhappy and express concerns that they are not able to access information quickly enough, for example, through the school website.

The school's commitment to achieving community cohesion within school and with the local and global communities is good. However, pupils' knowledge and understanding of

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being part of the United Kingdom is slightly less well developed.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children join the school with skills that are similar to typically expected levels for children of this age. A small minority of children have speaking and listening difficulties and their attainment is below the expected level on entry. Children make good progress and standards are slightly above average in all areas of learning at the start of Year 1. Teaching is organised well so that children experience the full range of activities to which they are entitled. For example, they make good gains in learning initial sounds and letters and have good opportunities to initiate play activities and resources for themselves. Early language development is promoted well as staff are keen play partners and take every chance to encourage children's communication skills. The Early Years Foundation Stage indoor learning environment is attractive and the outdoor area is available at all times and in all seasons. Children love being outside and confidently learn to take risks and explore in a safe, supervised environment. However, children do not always have enough chances to explore and investigate in the school's extensive outdoor grassed areas and this is the next area for development. Staff make learning fun and enjoyable and really challenge children to think and work together. For instance, children are currently enjoying the exciting post office role-play area where they happily wrap Christmas parcels to post.

Adults work as an effective team and have endless patience, unbounded enthusiasm and a good knowledge and understanding of the personal and learning needs of young children. This ensures that children make good progress in their personal, social and

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emotional development and their general well-being. Assessment is rigorous and accurate, enabling individual children's needs to be identified and met.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The majority of parents are happy with their children's experience at this school. One parent, expressing a typical view, writes, 'Generally a good school. The children leave as confident individuals, ready to face all new challenges.' However, a few parents have concerns primarily about communication, as reflected elsewhere in this report. A few also expressed concerns about behaviour, leadership and the progress their children are making. Inspectors agree with parents that more could be done to improve communication. However, the inspection team judge behaviour, leadership and pupils' progress to be good.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Mary's C of E Primary School, Yate to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 100 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 310 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	48	51	49	52	3	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	34	36	59	61	4	4	1	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	32	34	59	61	6	6	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	30	32	56	57	11	12	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	37	40	56	57	4	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	35	37	51	54	11	12	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	35	37	61	62	2	2	2	2
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	25	26	58	61	8	8	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	29	31	58	61	11	12	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	18	19	58	61	17	18	2	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	24	25	61	62	6	6	6	6
The school is led and managed effectively	26	27	57	60	11	12	4	4
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	39	41	54	55	4	4	1	1

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



7 December 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Mary's C of E Primary School, Yate, Bristol BS37 5BG

We enjoyed visiting your school and I am writing to thank you for two interesting days. Thank you to the guides who did a brilliant job of showing us around the school and to all those who talked to us and filled in the questionnaire. We enjoyed listening to your lovely singing during your Christmas concert rehearsals.

We think that you go to a good school.

These are the things we found out:

- You make good progress and reach above-average standards.
- Your behaviour is good and you work hard and play happily together.
- You are taught well and your lessons are fun and interesting.
- You love the good range of visits and visitors.
- Those of you who find learning difficult are given good support.
- Reception children have a happy and successful start to school.
- You are well cared for and you say you feel safe in school.
- Your school works well with other schools.

We think there are two main areas where the school can improve:

- Develop even better links with your parents so that all adults can work well together to make sure you have a good education.
- Make sure that the great curriculum work you do is displayed and celebrated throughout the school.

You can play your part as well by continuing to work hard and by keeping up your good standard of behaviour.

We wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Joyce Cox

Lead inspector

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