

St Mary's Church of England School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111990
Local Authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	337804
Inspection dates	26–27 April 2010
Reporting inspector	Judith Goodchild

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.
The registered childcare provision, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	205
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Claire Pearne
Headteacher	Dianne M Jones
Date of previous school inspection	11 July 2007
School address	Higher Trehaverne Truro TR1 3RJ
Telephone number	01872 276689
Fax number	01872 321283
Email address	head@st-marys-truro.cornwall.sch.uk

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	26–27 April 2010
Inspection number	337804

**Number of children on roll in the registered
childcare provision****Date of last inspection of registered
childcare provision**

Not previously inspected

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

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.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2010

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. During the inspection 17 lessons were seen and eight teachers were observed. Pupils' books were inspected and the school's assessment data on their current progress was analysed. Meetings were held with a group of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and members of staff responsible for specific aspects of the school's work. The school improvement plan, the School Improvement Partner's reports, minutes of the governing body meetings and policies and procedures relating to safeguarding were scrutinised. Fifty-eight parents and carers completed inspection questionnaires. The team also looked at questionnaires completed by staff and pupils.

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

- the action the school has taken to improve the progress and attainment of pupils by the end of Year 2
- strategies to address weaknesses in writing.

Information about the school

St Mary's is a smaller than average primary school. Virtually all pupils are White British and speak English as their first language. The number of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average. Their needs generally relate to behavioural, emotional and social problems and visual impairment. The school has breakfast and after-school clubs which are run by a private provider.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

St Mary's Primary School is an improving school. It provides a satisfactory standard of education for its pupils and has some good and outstanding elements. Its strength is in the outstanding care and support given to its pupils. Parents and carers commented that St Mary's has a warm welcoming atmosphere where, as one put it, their children are 'happy and feel safe'. Pupils clearly enjoy school very much and demonstrate good behaviour both in lessons and around the school. They feel exceptionally secure in school and have excellent understanding of safe practices. Pupils make a full contribution to the school community and have many opportunities to take responsibility and develop leadership skills, for example, through the school council. Pupils apply themselves well in lessons and persevere when experiencing difficulties and it is clear the majority are highly motivated to succeed.

The quality of teaching overall is satisfactory and improving as a result of rigorous action to address past weaknesses. During the inspection, examples of good and outstanding lessons were seen. Pupils are making satisfactory and at times good progress in lessons. However, the school's assessment system does not track the progress of individual pupils against their starting points. This results in pupils not always receiving the appropriate level of challenge in their learning.

Pupils join the school with the skills and knowledge expected for their age. They make satisfactory progress and by the time they leave in Year 6, attainment in English, mathematics and science is average. Progress in addressing weaknesses in writing has been slow and pupils' attainment in this area remains below average. Strategies recently introduced to address this are beginning to have an impact but there is still more work to be done. Opportunities are missed to boost pupils' speaking skills so that they are better equipped to explain their ideas in writing. There are also limited opportunities for pupils to write for a variety of purposes in subjects across the curriculum. Excellent pastoral care and guidance contribute significantly to pupils' personal development and well-being, particularly for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities who make good progress in their learning. Safeguarding procedures are excellent. Good partnerships with parents and a range of agencies make a strong contribution to pupils' well-being.

By the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, children have become independent and are able to work on tasks with little adult supervision. They make satisfactory progress in all areas of learning.

The school's capacity to sustain improvement is satisfactory. It has recognised that, having improved the quality of teaching, it now has to concentrate on raising attainment

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

and progress. Effective action is being taken to address this through addressing gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding. Current Year 2 pupils are on course to attain higher standards than those seen last year. The school's self-evaluation is satisfactory and it has identified appropriate priorities for development. Since the last inspection the governing body has become more actively involved in monitoring the work of the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop the current assessment system so that pupils' progress can be tracked from their starting points.

About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

- Improve attainment and progress in writing so that by 2012 attainment is at least in line with national averages by:
 - using a broader range of strategies to develop pupils' speaking and listening to help them with their writing
 - increasing opportunities for writing in a range of subjects and topics.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Pupils' attitudes to learning and behaviour are good. They are keen to achieve and their attention only wanders when teaching does not engage them or provide the challenge they need. They respond well to challenge and exciting tasks. During the inspection, pupils in Year 6 thoroughly enjoyed working on creating a 'bug hotel'. They gained many scientific skills through conducting field research and recording information as well as increasing their knowledge of the natural world. When given learning opportunities such as these, pupils make good progress, but this is not a consistent feature of all lessons. Pupils value the termly individual conferencing sessions where targets are set and they are able to monitor their own progress towards meeting them.

Pupils say that they enjoy coming to school and the range of activities provided for them. The residential camps are a particular favourite. Virtually all pupils take part in after-school activities and particularly enjoy the opportunities to learn new sports such as fencing. Pupils understand the need for physical activity to sustain a healthy lifestyle and many follow up in their own time activities that have initially been provided for them through the school. Pupils make good use of the range of opportunities that they have to show initiative and leadership. For example, older pupils run the school bank, organise 'huff and puff' sessions at lunchtimes and organise games for younger ones. Pupils show sensitive awareness of the needs of others and are keen fund-raisers. However, their knowledge of the range of cultures represented within the United Kingdom is limited.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
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	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

There is a lack of consistency in the quality of teaching across the school. Where teaching is good or better, expectations are high, the pace of learning is rapid and activities are planned to engage all pupils in the learning process. Effective use is made of ongoing assessment to inform planning so that lessons build on prior learning and challenge all pupils. However, where lessons are not of this quality information on pupils' prior learning is not taken into account and tasks set are either not accessible to lower attaining pupils or lack sufficient challenge for higher attaining ones. Opportunities are missed at times to develop pupils' speaking and listening through active questioning in order to support the development of their writing skills. Teaching assistants are well briefed and make a significant contribution to the quality of pupils' learning, particularly those identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The curriculum makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development. A range of visits enriches learning opportunities and they are used as a stimulus for work in the classroom. There are good partnerships with secondary schools which provide additional opportunities for pupils. Gifted and talented pupils, for example, attend regular mathematics workshops. Recently Year 5 took part in a tag rugby session linked to GCSE assessment at the secondary school. Sports coaches and junior sports leaders provide coaching and other activities. However, there are insufficient planned opportunities and strategies to develop writing skills across all areas of the curriculum.

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

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

Arrangements to ensure the care and welfare of pupils are outstanding. Parents and carers are happy with the support their children receive and confident that they are kept safe and their welfare needs are met. The provision to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is excellent. The support provided for them in lessons is high quality; progress is tracked systematically and targets are reviewed on a three-weekly basis. Good links with external agencies and health professionals ensure effective support is provided to meet the needs of pupils and their families. Pupils are well prepared for their move to secondary school through a comprehensive induction programme and regular visits.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The senior leadership and governing body are ambitious for the school and share a common aim of continuing improvement. Relatively new, enthusiastic and young staff are being well supported in developing their practice to meet the standard the school has set for the quality of teaching. There is a good working partnership with the governing body. Governors have regular focused visits and a particular strength is the rigour with which they monitor the safeguarding provision. Leaders appropriately tackle discrimination and ensure equal opportunity. The school has a good partnership with parents and carers. Their views are canvassed annually and taken into account as part of the school's self-evaluation process. Their children's targets are shared with them each term and workshops are held to help them support their child's learning in mathematics and reading. Provision for community cohesion is satisfactory. The school has well-established links with its local community and churches and is involved with events such as the City of Light. It has established links with a school in Africa but recognises that there is more to do to raise pupils' awareness of the diversity of cultures found within the United Kingdom.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3

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	
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children start the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and experiences broadly typical for their age. Good transition arrangements help children to settle into the secure learning environment quickly and they enjoy coming to school. There is an appropriate focus on developing social skills and children learn and play well together. The 'thinking cap' session on Friday gives children the opportunity to say what activities they would like the following week. For example, children wanted to have bike races so numbers were placed on bikes to make this more authentic. Assessment through observations is regular and progress recorded in all areas of learning. This shows that most children make satisfactory progress towards reaching expected levels at the end of the Reception Year. However, as in the rest of the school, progress is not tracked against each child's starting point to ensure, for example, that those who have a good base of skills build on these quickly. For those children who need additional support, for example with speech and language, the provision is good. The quality of teaching children receive is satisfactory. However, at times the balance between child-initiated and adult-directed learning does not ensure that children are encouraged to undertake activities that will, for example, develop their early writing skills. By the end of their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage, most children have gained in confidence, their behaviour is good and they are independent learners.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

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

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. Parents and carers feel their children are safe and enjoy school. They are very happy with their children's experience at school. Comments made particular reference to the additional support provided by the school both for them and their child. A few expressed concerns about how the school deals with unacceptable behaviour, the progress their child is making and how the school takes account of their views and concerns. The inspectors judged that behaviour is well managed. Past weaknesses in teaching have been addressed and pupils are now making satisfactory progress. Parents' views are sought on an annual basis and the school tries to deal quickly with any concerns.

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 School 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 58 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 205 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	35	60	22	38	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	34	59	23	40	1	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	24	41	32	55	2	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	27	47	27	47	3	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	34	59	22	38	2	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	34	59	21	36	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	28	48	28	48	1	2	0	0
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)	26	45	28	48	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	27	47	25	43	1	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	27	47	22	38	4	7	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	24	47	23	40	5	9	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	26	45	26	45	2	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	32	55	23	40	2	3	0	0

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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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.



28 April 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Mary's Church of England School, Truro TR1 3RJ

I would like to thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently and for talking to us about your school and work.

We found that the school provides you with a satisfactory education and it is improving. You told us that you feel safe and secure and enjoy coming to school. You particularly like going out on school trips, residential camps and activities to help you develop healthy lifestyles. We found your behaviour is good both in lessons and in the playground. You work hard in your lessons. By the end of Year 6, you have made satisfactory progress in your learning and attain standards broadly in line with those expected for your age. The partnership the school has developed with the community, other schools and agencies is good and extends and enriches your learning as well as contributing to the high quality care that you receive. Links with your parents and carers are good.

We have identified some areas that need improvement to make your school an even better place. These are the things that we have asked your school to do:

- improve your progress and attainment in writing
- make sure that the progress you make in your learning is tracked against your starting points so that your teachers know how well you are doing.

You are already playing your part by behaving well and working hard in lessons. We wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Judith Goodchild

Lead inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.