

St Mary's Community Primary School, Beetley

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121011
Local Authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	339828
Inspection dates	16–17 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Norma Ball

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	193
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Simon Brock
Headteacher	Ralph Hedley
Date of previous school inspection	11 October 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 18 lessons and saw eight teachers. The majority of the inspectors' time was given to looking at learning. The inspectors met parents, informally, on the first morning of the inspection, held meetings with the headteacher, teaching staff, governors and pupils. The school's work was observed, including: samples of pupils' work, the school's systems for tracking progress and the numerical information derived from it, management and curriculum documentation, teachers' planning, safeguarding documentation, and 49 parental questionnaire returns.

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

- the effectiveness of strategies to improve achievement for pupils in Key Stage 2, and for mathematics throughout the school
- the consistent quality of teaching, learning and progress across the school
- how well assessment information is used to plan lessons and set clear targets so pupils make the best progress possible
- the quality of leadership and management at all levels in monitoring areas of the school's work and planning for future improvement.

Information about the school

St. Mary's is an average size primary school and almost all pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is similar to that found nationally, and includes pupils with autistic spectrum disorders and moderate learning difficulties. The Early Years Foundation Stage consists of one Reception class. The leadership of the school has gone through an unsettled period extending over several years. The acting headteacher has been in post since September 2009. The Kool Kats breakfast and after-school club shares the school site but is not managed by the governing body and is subject to a separate inspection. The school has gained Eco School and Healthy School awards.

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

The school provides a satisfactory education. The acting headteacher has very quickly united a new team of teachers and established a productive partnership with governors which is helping to set a clear direction for the school. He has also been successful in reassuring parents and involving them more closely in their children's education. As a result there is a positive ethos within the school and emergent signs that the progress pupils make is beginning to improve. Pupils enjoy school as shown by their above-average attendance. A large majority of parents are pleased with all that the school provides and the recent improvements that have been made. One parent said, 'Over the last twelve months St. Mary's has been completely transformed. There is more communication and feedback. My daughter has never had a day when she did not want to come to school.'

Children settle happily in Reception because they are well taught and have interesting learning experiences. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory throughout the school and attainment at the end of Year 6 is broadly average, although it has slowly declined in recent years. Pupils' progress is now monitored carefully. Teachers use assessment information to plan work to help pupils make better progress. However, it is not yet used consistently throughout the school to ensure that all groups are challenged to make the best progress they can, especially the more able. Target-setting in literacy and numeracy has been introduced but targets are not always succinct and not a regular focus in lessons to remind pupils what they still need to learn. Strategies to improve attainment in literacy and numeracy are being introduced gradually. The recent focus on improving opportunities for pupils to extend their writing skills, for example, is showing early signs of success. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress from their individual starting points.

Teaching is better at the end of each key stage because work is more carefully matched to pupils' abilities. Overall pupils' personal development is satisfactory but they can be over-excitable at play times. In some lessons behaviour is not managed effectively and learning time is lost. Monitoring of teaching is not regular and the good practice which does exist, is not shared. Subject leaders are not yet as closely involved in monitoring teaching as they are in tracking progress in their subject areas. They are still new to their responsibilities but are rapidly gaining both skill and confidence. The curriculum is satisfactory with good opportunities for pupils to develop and use their information and communication technology (ICT) skills.

The school has experienced a long period of difficulties resulting from leadership and staffing changes. A renewed spirit of enthusiasm and ambition has been introduced by the acting headteacher. Governors have embraced the new positive ethos in the school

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and are rapidly acquiring the skills to play a full and active part in monitoring all areas of the school's work, especially promoting improved achievement for all pupils. Strategic planning does not involve governors and subject leaders fully and there is too much reliance placed on the acting headteacher. Issues from the previous inspection are being addressed and the schools capacity to improve further is satisfactory.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure information from tests, assessment and marking are used to:
 - plan work which meets the needs of different groups of pupils more closely, especially the more able
 - develop targets with pupils so they are clear about the next steps in their learning.
- Improve teaching so that a greater proportion is good or better by regular monitoring and sharing of good practice when identified.
- Improve behaviour by January 2011 by:
 - improving the quality of playground supervision
 - ensuring a consistent approach to behaviour management in lessons.
- Increase the skills, confidence and participation of subject leaders and governors so they are able to take a full part in evaluating and continuing to improve the work of the school.
- 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.

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

Pupils make satisfactory progress throughout the school. They enjoy school particularly the lively discussions in class, and in small groups. Most show positive attitudes to learning. A few pupils can be distracted and some off-task behaviour can lead to short interruptions to lessons which slows progress for the whole class. Initiatives to improve progress in literacy and numeracy are developing gradually across the school. Further work is required to promote better progress in mathematics. Pupils' current work and the schools tracking of performance indicate that progress is improving but it is not consistent across all year groups.

Pupils have a very clear understanding of what is involved in developing a healthy lifestyle. There has been an effective school focus on this aspect of their development which has resulted in the Healthy School award. Pupils are not always aware of the need to behave in a safe and sensible manner in the playground. Sometimes over-excited play, when not quickly managed by supervising staff, can lead to bumps and tumbles. Pupils have a limited range of responsibilities in school. However, when given responsibility such as acting as school councillors, pupils carry out their role with pride and efficiency. Pupils are generous in response to charities and are involved in

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supporting their local community especially church events. Pupils know right from wrong, have good opportunities to reflect and consider their own feelings but have a limited understanding of other cultures and ways of life beyond their own community. Pupils are soundly prepared for the next stage of their education because of their personal development and their satisfactory achievement.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	3
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
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	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

Relationships are good at all levels in the school and pupils enjoy their learning. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and learning objectives for lessons are consistently clear. Assessment information is not used consistently to plan lessons that provide challenging tasks for all ability groups so they make the best progress they can. In particular, more able pupils are not always stretched because they sometimes have the same work as others which they complete quickly and easily and then do more of the same work. Targets are now set for pupils in literacy and numeracy but these too are inconsistent. Pupils are not closely involved in deciding their targets and they are not a regular focus in most lessons so pupils do not see them as helpful. Targets are well used

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 Year 6 where pupils know clearly what they are expected to learn and are ambitious to achieve their targets. This has an impact on the progress they make. Marking of pupils' work is regular and good work and effort are praised. The use of developmental comments to identify how and where to improve a piece of work and so make better progress is used consistently by teachers. The quality of marking is better in Years 3 to 6.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are assessed quickly. The help they receive from learning support assistants both in class and small groups or individual support is variable. Where support is good pupil's needs are met well and help and challenge are provided in equal measure to build both knowledge and confidence. However, some support is inadequate in meeting the pupil's needs. Pupils are not engaged or encouraged and their progress is hindered. The school are taking steps to bring about improvements in this area. Overall pupils feel confidence in the teaching staff who care for them and confide their problems.

The use of ICT has improved throughout the school. Laptops are used with good effect in all year groups to help pupils develop their ICT skills but also to provide research and word processing opportunities within other subject areas. Links between subjects are developing and not only make learning more fun but provide opportunities to extend literacy and numeracy skills. For example, in Year 3, work on the great fire of London linked history, art and design technology as well as literacy and some numeracy in measuring and cutting materials. The teaching of letters and sounds and creation of stimulating opportunities for pupils to extend their writing skills are developing well and pupil show enjoyment in writing tasks. During the inspection pupils were keen to show inspectors their work on display in the corridors and in classrooms. A limited but valuable range of clubs and visits extend learning soundly.

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	3

How effective are leadership and management?

The acting headteacher has provided incisive leadership for the school. Clear priorities for improvement have been identified and are beginning to have an impact on improving progress for all pupils. Staff are united and gaining confidence in their teaching and leadership roles. A successful focus, much appreciated by many parents, has been the improvement of links with home. Parents and carers are more fully involved in their child's learning through workshops, guidance on teaching sounds of letters and dyslexia

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and open evenings. Regular newsletters, a new interim report and coffee mornings have helped bring parents in closer touch with the school. Governors are developing their skills and are better placed to ask searching questions of leaders and managers and so monitor the work of the school more efficiently. A range of planned visits by governors and assigned responsibilities have already been implemented. They are supportive of the school and anxious to play an active part in helping plan future improvements.

Community cohesion is satisfactory and the understanding and involvement in the local community is gradually expanding to embrace new links with schools and communities beyond. Such developments are beginning to help extend pupils' awareness of the multicultural dimensions of society and equip them with citizenship skills for the future. The promotion of equal opportunities is satisfactory. The progress made by different groups of pupils, including the more able and those with special educational needs and/or difficulties, is beginning to show signs of improvement. All safeguarding requirements are met and new policies are now integrated into the school.

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
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	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
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 make a good start to their learning in Reception because of the stimulating learning environment and the good care they receive. During the inspection children had been inspired by a visitor who showed them his motor cycle. Their imagination was stimulated and one child led the rest in going to their quickly constructed garage saying, 'I'm on my motorbike. I love it because it goes really fast to the breakdown garage. My washer's a bit loose so the wheel's about to come off.' Repairs were hastily completed.

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Children thrive in their learning, develop a love for school along with independence and confidence. Resources are used well to create a wealth of interesting experiences for children in all six areas of learning. Children have a good balance of both adult-led and independent activities. Some further development of the subtle intervention in activities children choose to promote learning is still required. The learning area outside the classroom is used well and extends to the main playground when that area is free. As a forest school additional valuable learning experiences are provided which help children develop a love and respect for their environment. Awareness of the environment by children and older pupils is reflected in the Eco School award.

Children enter Reception with skills and abilities that are similar to other children of the same age. Good teaching and well-planned activities ensure they make good progress and by the time they enter Year 1 they are confident in expressing their ideas, have improved number skills and their creative development and knowledge and understanding of the world are good. Leadership and management are good so staff work as a close and efficient team. Children's progress is recorded regularly and used well to ensure that parents and carers are kept well informed about all aspects of their child's development.

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 large majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire or spoke to inspectors were pleased with the school. They raised concerns across a wide range of areas including: the progress their children were making, the links with home and the account taken of their views, and also behaviour. However, parents also showed an understanding of the difficult period the school had experienced and confidence in the leadership and management of the acting headteacher. The inspection confirmed many of the concerns raised by parents and also the positive recent developments that have taken place across all areas of the school's work.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Mary's Community Primary School, Beetley 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 49 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 193 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	24	49	22	45	1	2	2	4
The school keeps my child safe	19	39	27	55	2	4	1	2
The school informs me about my child's progress	14	29	27	55	7	14	1	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	15	31	22	45	8	16	2	4
The teaching is good at this school	17	35	30	61	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	15	31	26	53	8	16	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	17	35	30	61	2	4	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)	14	29	26	53	2	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	15	31	27	55	4	8	2	4
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	12	24	22	45	8	16	5	10
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	12	24	22	45	3	6	2	4
The school is led and managed effectively	13	27	28	57	4	8	4	8
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	17	35	25	51	5	10	1	2

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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	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.



18 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Mary's Community Primary School, Beetley, Norfolk, NR20 4BW

Thank you very much for making us feel so welcome when we visited your school. Your school is a happy place and we know by your regular attendance that you enjoy being there.

You know a great deal about how to be healthy and some of you told us what fun your lessons are, especially when you were doing projects such as learning about dinosaurs or the great fire of London. Your headteacher, who is with you until the end of the summer term, leads your school well and is working hard with the rest of the staff to help you do the best you can.

We think that your school is satisfactory. This means it does some things well, but also needs to make some things better.

We have asked your teachers to use all they know about how well you are doing to plan tasks for you that are not too difficult or too easy so that you make better progress, especially those of you who find learning easier. We have also suggested that the targets you are given in literacy and numeracy are very clear, you understand them and always use them in lessons.

Your teachers can make your lessons even better by sharing all the good things about their teaching with one another.

We feel that your behaviour is not always as good as it could be. You can help by being attentive in lessons and sensible in the playground. To help you do this we have asked that those people who supervise playtime watch what is happening carefully. In lessons we have asked your teachers to deal with silly behaviour quickly.

Finally we have asked the staff and governors to work together closely to make sure your school gets better and better.

You can help by working hard and always trying to do your best in school

Yours sincerely

Norma Ball

Lead inspector

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