

# St Mary's Church of England Controlled Infant School

## Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	123137
<b>Local Authority</b>	Oxfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	340288
<b>Inspection dates</b>	19–20 May 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Joyce Cox

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

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	88
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Chris Gardener
<b>Headteacher</b>	Joseph Rubba
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	20 May 2010
<b>School address</b>	Church Green Witney OX28 4AZ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01993 702387
<b>Fax number</b>	01993 704580
<b>Email address</b>	headteacher.3207@st-marys-witney.oxon.sch.uk

---

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](mailto: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](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)

W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2010

## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They observed three teachers and visited nine lessons. They also observed several teaching assistants working with groups of pupils. Inspectors held meetings with governors, staff and pupils and looked at the school development plan, assessment information, teachers' planning and safeguarding procedures. They also analysed 53 parental questionnaires and spoke briefly to 45 parents and carers.

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 pupils' attainment in writing
- how successfully staff use assessment data to plan the next steps in pupils' learning
- the provision in the Reception class to ensure children receive full access and entitlement to the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum
- the extent and impact of subject leaders' and governors' involvement in whole-school improvement.

## Information about the school

This is a smaller than average infant school. Almost all the pupils are from White British backgrounds. A very small number of pupils speak English as an additional language. A small number of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The main areas of need are speech, language and communication and learning difficulties. There are three classes in the school and children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in the Reception class.

A new headteacher was appointed in April 2009 and the Year 2 teacher and the Chair of the Governing Body are both new to their positions as of September 2009.

**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

This is a good school. It provides outstanding care and support for all and works exceptionally well with parents to support pupils' learning and personal development. The warm and caring relationships help pupils to feel very safe and pupils' excellent behaviour means that the school is a very happy place. The inspirational leadership of the new headteacher has ensured good improvement since the last inspection when the school was judged to be satisfactory. Many parents comment on the numerous improvements since the headteacher joined the school. For instance, one parent writes, 'The new headteacher has had a very positive effect. He has improved the teaching while maintaining the strong nurturing environment. There are more clubs and interesting activities and he actively seeks, respects and encourages parents' and pupils' views.' Children get off to a sound start in the Reception class. Good relationships and kind and friendly adults ensure children settle quickly. Although a range of relevant activities are provided, current planning and adult support for activities undertaken by the children independently are insufficiently focused to ensure children make consistently good progress in their learning. Information gained from detailed observations and assessments is not always used sufficiently well enough to plan activities to meet children's various learning needs. It is fair to say that the indoor accommodation is very cramped and although staff make good use of the outside playground, the space has to be shared with older pupils at break times.

Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1 as a result of effective teaching. Lessons are planned and managed well so that pupils enjoy learning, behave exceptionally well and persevere at all times. Attainment has risen since the last inspection and is now above average in reading and mathematics and average in writing. Several strategies have been put in place to improve pupils' writing which are starting to have a good impact on standards. Nevertheless there are not enough chances for pupils to practise their writing skills in subjects other than literacy and there is no handwriting policy to guide staff in developing pupils' writing from Reception to Year 1. The broad and balanced curriculum is planned effectively to meet pupils' various learning needs. Good levels of support from talented teaching assistants enable all groups of pupils to make good progress. The headteacher has a strong determination to raise attainment further through carefully tracking pupils' progress. Together with the staff and governors he carefully evaluates the provision and uses the school development plan to monitor the success of initiatives. The impact of good leadership can be seen in improved teaching, faster progress, higher standards and a dramatic increase in pupil numbers, all of which demonstrate a good capacity for further improvement.

**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

**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Raise pupils' attainment in writing further through:
  - increased opportunities to write in all subjects
  - implementing a handwriting policy.
- Improve the quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage through:
  - more effective planning and greater attention to ensuring that adults interact effectively in child-selected activities to extend learning and development
  - ensuring staff use the detailed information they collect on children's progress to plan for their various learning needs
  - implementing the plans to relocate the Reception class to provide more accommodation indoors and outdoors.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****2**

Inspection evidence confirms that all pupils work hard and behave exceptionally well in lessons because their teachers have high expectations and keep them actively engaged in their learning. They are keen and enthusiastic and many hands shoot up to answer questions because pupils are very interested in learning new facts. This was very evident in a Year 2 literacy lesson where pupils were fascinated by life in the Costa Rica rainforests and could not wait to research new facts about the climate and the wildlife. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve well because they are supported by teaching assistants who make learning fun. For instance, Year 1 pupils enjoyed learning to write character descriptions because they had effective and sensitive support from a teaching assistant. All pupils make good progress and good attention is paid to ensuring more-able pupils are challenged in lessons. Pupils develop a good knowledge of how to eat healthily and keep fit and enjoy being school councillors and raising money for charity. They also like the strong links with the local community through events such as maypole dancing on Church Green and the Witney Carnival. They say they feel really safe in school as 'there is only one entrance door and there is nothing here to hurt us.' They have drawn safety posters and designed and made attractive visitors' badges and know only people wearing these should be in school. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and they are very kind and thoughtful towards each other and have a strong sense of right and wrong. They are very proud of their school and love the fact that it is a really old building as they are fascinated by its history. Pupils make good progress in developing their basic skills and have mature social skills. These qualities, coupled with good attendance, means they are well prepared for the next stage in their education.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<sup>1</sup> 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

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	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
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

**How effective is the provision?**

Teachers deploy support staff well and make good use of resources. For instance, in one lesson, where the focus was on effective note taking, a teaching assistant demonstrated how to make brief notes and set a very good example with well-formed, legible handwriting. Good relationships and positive interactions ensure pupils are attentive and involved and skilful questioning and emphasis on ensuring pupils understand specific vocabulary keeps them on track and motivated. Interactive whiteboards are used well by adults to enliven learning, although there are few chances for pupils to use them. The headteacher tracks pupils' progress carefully and effective measures are swiftly introduced to support those not achieving well enough. The curriculum is well planned to take account of pupils' varying needs, although there are not enough chances for pupils to practise their writing skills in all subjects. Art is a key feature of the curriculum and paintings in the style of Georgia O'Keefe by Year 1 pupils are of a high standard. Pupils thoroughly enjoy the good range of clubs such as dancing, cooking and football. The school gives exemplary care to its most vulnerable pupils and their families, which is enhanced through effective links with outside agencies such as the home support team. Staff are exceptionally vigilant in discovering what would be most beneficial in supporting vulnerable pupils. For example, they have arranged for some pupils to have weekend sports activities. Parents comment that the good induction arrangements when children join the Reception class help them to settle quickly into their new community.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

**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

<b>The quality of teaching</b> Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	<b>2</b>
	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher's determined, effective leadership has moved the school forward rapidly since his appointment. There is a good team spirit in the school and subject leaders are fully involved in driving the school's development. For example, they are currently being proactive in developing a new curriculum to ensure even more interesting and relevant experiences for the pupils. Careful, albeit somewhat modest at times, self-evaluation and a rigorous focus on raising attainment have resulted in many improvements since the last inspection. Teaching is monitored well by the headteacher in conjunction with his school improvement partner. Regular analysis of assessment information ensures a good understanding of the next steps in pupils' learning.

Governors and staff are rigorous in ensuring that pupils are safe and secure and all statutory requirements regarding safeguarding and child protection are met. Governors are extremely supportive and are fully involved in decision making and increasingly monitoring the school's work. There are equal opportunities for every pupil and there is no discrimination. As a result, all pupils achieve equally well. The outstanding partnership with parents contributes significantly to the strong, cohesive school community. Parents appreciate this very much. One comments, 'St Mary's has a great sense of community and it is a friendly school that the children feel very much part of. This small school has a real feel of being a family.' There is a clear understanding of the importance of community cohesion and staff ensure pupils learn about other children's faiths and cultures. There are good plans in hand to extend current provision even further in order to provide better links with children in other parts of Britain and the world.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b> Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	<b>2</b>
	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>

**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

<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

**Early Years Foundation Stage**

Children start in the Reception class with skills and abilities that are similar to those expected for four-year-olds in most areas of learning. They are above average on entry in terms of their personal and social development. They enjoy coming to school, behave very well and feel safe and secure in a caring and supportive environment. Parents like the carefully considered way their children are welcomed into the school and say they feel active partners in their children's education. The school's tracking data indicates that children make good progress in all areas of learning and enter Year 1 slightly above the expected levels. Inspection evidence indicates that children make sound rather than good progress because teaching and learning and the planned curriculum are satisfactory. This is because planning for activities undertaken by the children independently is not always sufficiently detailed to ensure all staff are clear about what children are expected to learn. This hampers the adults' ability to question and challenge children fully through their interactions with them. A recent initiative to ensure children learn their letters and sounds is having a very good impact on their early reading and word-building skills. However, insufficient opportunities are provided for children to practise their early writing and mark-making skills. Staff carry out detailed assessments and observations but this valuable information is not always used precisely enough to plan to meet children's various needs. On many occasions all children do exactly the same activities, which does not challenge the more-able or support the less-able children. The indoor accommodation is very small and cramped for 30 children. Role play areas are not sufficiently well created to encourage purposeful play and language development. The outdoor area is the playground which is shared with older pupils, so it is not easy for children to use it at all times. Staff do their very best to ensure children have time outdoors every day and they skilfully overcome the playground's tarmac surface by planting and growing vegetables and flowers in pots and containers. There are excellent plans in place to develop a new Early Years Foundation Stage building and outdoor area which would clearly enhance the provision considerably. The headteacher is working closely and effectively with the Early Years Foundation Stage staff to evaluate the quality of the provision to secure and implement improvements. In the meantime, staff and governors are eagerly awaiting the start of their new building.

**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

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>3</b>
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

## Views of parents and carers

Over half of the parents and carers responded to the Ofsted questionnaire. All felt that the school is led and managed effectively and that teaching is good. All parents and carers are happy with their children's experiences. A very small number of parents raised concerns but there were no issues which were relevant to the school as a whole. Parents' individual concerns were summarised and reported to the headteacher without identifying any individual. Inspectors agree wholeheartedly with the parents' and carers' very positive views.

### Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Mary's Church of England Controlled Infant 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 53 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 88 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	43	84	9	19	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	44	86	8	13	1	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	24	43	27	53	2	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	32	61	20	37	1	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	35	68	18	32	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	29	56	23	44	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	36	70	17	30	0	0	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)	32	66	18	34	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	37	72	16	28	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	32	67	17	33	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	34	64	18	34	1	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	43	84	9	16	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	45	86	8	14	0	0	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](http://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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



21 May 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Mary's Church of England Controlled Infant School, Witney OX28 4AZ

We really enjoyed visiting you and I am writing to thank you for the two very happy days. I hope your maypole dancing went really well.

These are the things we found out.

- You make good progress and reach above-average standards.
- Your behaviour is excellent and you work hard and play very happily together.
- You are taught well and your lessons are usually fun and interesting.
- Your headteacher is a good leader.
- You are very well cared for in school and you say you feel very safe.
- Your parents like your school very much.

We have asked the school to do two things to be even better:

- make sure you all do really well in writing
- improve the way the Reception children learn and play so that they have a really great start to school life.

You can help by always being kind and by behaving well as you do now.

We wish you and your families all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Joyce Cox

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](http://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](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).**