

St Mary's C of E Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	126024
Local Authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	340898
Inspection dates	21–22 October 2009
Reporting inspector	Peter Thrussell

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	101
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Paul Griffiths
Headteacher	Mrs Janet Llewelyn
Date of previous school inspection	2 September 2006
School address	Brookpit Lane Clymping West Sussex BN17 5QU
Telephone number	01903 714325
Fax number	01903 732017
Email address	head@st-marysclymping.w-sussex.sch.uk

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

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited seven lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff, and a group of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at documents including the school improvement plan, policies, monitoring records, governors' minutes, tracking data, local authority reports, and questionnaires completed by 40 parents, 52 pupils and 10 members of staff.

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

- how well teaching is adapted to the learning of different groups of pupils, particularly boys, and the use and effectiveness of adult support
- the effectiveness of assessment to support learning and drive improvement
- the role of leaders and managers at all levels, including governors, in securing and sustaining improvements
- whether provision and standards in the Early Years Foundation Stage are as good as the school indicates.

Information about the school

This is a smaller than average primary school. Apart from the Reception, all other classes have two year groups. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. Few are known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average. The main needs are speech, language and communication and moderate learning. The school has gained Activemark, Healthy Schools and Silver-Eco 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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school. It is well led and managed by the headteacher. She is well supported by the leadership team, staff and governors, who share a positive vision for the school's continuing development and improvement. Part of this vision is for pupils to be fully involved in the life of the school and to play an active and independent role in their learning. To this end, it has adopted a 'freeflow' approach to the curriculum. This encourages pupils, within the confines of a topic, to choose aspects that they wish to follow up, to plan how they want to do this and how they will present their findings, and to evaluate both their work and approach to it. When making a study of a nearby seaside town pupils chose to contact an estate agent and a lifeboat station to follow up their studies; when evaluating their work on the Victorians, one pupil, who had decided to work alone, realised the benefits of working in a group, while other pupils felt that they needed to think more about working effectively together in their group. Pupils also take responsibility for their school community. The eco action team looks after the environment, working in the school garden and monitoring the performance of the school's wind turbine. The school council, working within a budget, planned improvements to the toilets. Pupils say they enjoy these different opportunities, fully appreciating how the school has a strong regard to their safety and welfare. Their good behaviour and attitudes contribute to the good progress they make in their learning.

Rates of progress have steadily improved in recent years with a majority of pupils now making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics, towards the challenging end-of-year targets set for them. A focus on English has been particularly successful. A systematic approach to teaching sounds and letters to younger pupils, in conjunction with reading and writing skills, has been extended to older year groups. A scheme to encourage pupils to evaluate their writing against given criteria is used well by pupils and adds to the expectation that they should evaluate how well they are doing in their learning.

Action has been taken to develop the role of teaching assistants and to improve the effectiveness of the support they provide for the pupils they are working with. This support, although good overall and considerably improved over the last year, at times does not always ensure that pupils are fully engaged in their learning and gaining the optimum benefit from it. This action, along with others set out in the school improvement plan, is based on the school's careful self-evaluation, which involves all staff and governors. Although effective, the school improvement plan does not always show how some of these actions are to be measured and evaluated, especially in relation to raising achievement.

The outside area for the Early Years Foundation Stage has recently improved, but along

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with the inside area, is not set up to fully reflect the different areas of children's learning. The learning environment, particularly when children are making their own choices, does not provide a sharp enough focus on these areas, so that progress in them is restricted. The management of the learning environment, at times, also impedes children's learning. The leader has an awareness of where improvements are required, and these are recorded, but there is no detailed action plan to show how these will be brought about.

Given the general success of its well-considered actions to bring about improvements, and the accuracy of its self-evaluation involving the whole of the school community, the school has a good capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all adult support fully engages pupils in their learning.
- Ensure that the actions planned by the school to bring about improvement are rigorously evaluated for their impact, especially in relation to raising achievement.
- Improve provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - fully planning the use of and effectively managing both the indoor and outdoor areas, so as to fully reflect the different areas of learning
 - ensuring that actions to bring about improvement are clearly identified and carried through.

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

The quality of learning observed in lessons during the inspection, and seen in the work produced by pupils, was good for all groups of pupils. The school's tracking data confirms a picture of good and improving progress. Opportunities for pupils to evaluate how well they are doing in lessons, along with their own targets to aim for, help to ensure that they are involved in their learning and know what to do to improve. Boys, especially, enjoy 'freeflow' activities, which engage them more fully in their learning and contribute to their good progress. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress as the support for them is well planned and managed. Overall standards tend to fluctuate with small year groups. Nevertheless, although broadly average, there is a rising trend shown in the national test results at the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science.

Pupils enjoy school, shown in their good attendance. Staff go to great lengths to ensure that pupils' successes are recognised and valued, effectively building up their confidence and self-esteem. Assemblies and strong church links further contribute to their good spiritual development. Pupils say they feel safe in school, knowing that they can turn to a member of staff if they have any particular concerns. Older pupils have designed and led sessions for others on different aspects of safety, as part of a healthy living week. Pupils have a good understanding of what constitutes a healthy diet appreciating the nutritious meals served at lunchtime. They benefit from the many opportunities they

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have for sport and physical activity, understanding the importance of keeping fit. Their eagerness to adopt healthy lifestyles has been recognised in national awards. Pupils' contribution to the wider community is good. For example, they debated 'Eco Towns' in the local council chamber. These aspects of their personal development, along with their independent learning skills and achievement in basic skills, show that pupils are well prepared for their future life and learning.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
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?

Lessons are managed well. Teachers establish good relationships with pupils, who in turn behave well and work with good concentration. Where teaching assistants do not fully engage pupils in their learning, attention slips a little. Pupils' progress is carefully tracked, and assessment information mostly used well to plan lessons to match activities to pupils' different learning needs. Lessons have clear learning objectives that are shared with pupils, drawing on the effective use of interactive whiteboards to enliven teaching and learning. Pupils have frequent access to computers, using them effectively to support their activities and develop their information and communication technology

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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skills. There are good opportunities for pupils to discuss what they are doing and to evaluate their progress, particularly at the end of lessons.

The school makes full use of the local environment to provide real learning experiences. 'Freeflow' activities, although providing a more open-ended approach to pupils' learning, are nevertheless carefully monitored and recorded to ensure that pupils are continuously building up skills in different subjects. The school makes good provision for literacy and numeracy, but opportunities for pupils to use and develop these particular skills at appropriate and challenging levels are not yet fully part of the 'freeflow' approach. Good enrichment opportunities, including a wide range of popular after-school activities, trips and visitors, contribute effectively to pupils' good personal and social development.

The care arrangements for all pupils are good and well organised. Close links with families ensure that the school works in partnership to support any vulnerable pupils. The support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well organised, using regular withdrawal groups to ensure that specific needs are all catered for. Outside specialists, such as a speech and language therapist, provide further training for support staff. Gifted and talented pupils are encouraged to take part in locally organised enrichment 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?

Leaders and managers at all levels have mostly been successful in bringing about school improvement and ensuring equality of opportunity for all pupils. Subject leaders carefully monitor progress, looking at planning, checking pupils' work and carrying out lesson observations. From these, points for action are identified, which have helped to bring about improvements to the quality of teaching and learning. Governors are very supportive of the work of the school. They ensure that effective safeguarding procedures are fully in place and adhered to. They are keen to check that pupils have a well-rounded education and are knowledgeable of the school's academic performance. However, the school improvement plan does not provide them with a fully adequate tool to monitor and evaluate actions being taken, especially with regard to raising achievement. The school works well with parents and carers and seeks to involve them in their children's education, for example through family learning courses and regular opportunities to come and see the school in action. The school improvement plan is shared with them, sometimes resulting in offers of support. Good links with other

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schools and outside specialists contribute to curriculum provision and the support for pupils. Community cohesion is promoted satisfactorily. The school has identified that action needs to be taken to develop further pupils' knowledge and understanding of the cultural diversity of the United Kingdom. Links with another school are already being planned with this in mind.

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	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	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are broadly in line with those expected at this age. They make satisfactory progress across the different areas of learning. Visits to nurseries, good links with parents, and opportunities for children to visit the school before starting ensure that they quickly settle. Each child has a learning journal to record progress and development during the Reception Year. Although it has much potential in supporting children's learning, the use of this journal is in its infancy, and yet to include contributions from parents and teaching assistants. Assessment is patchy so that the planned provision for each child's development is not fully matched to their individual learning needs. Planning shows that the different areas of learning are being addressed, with opportunities for both teacher-directed and child-initiated activities. However, the outdoor area, especially, is not set out to fully reflect these areas and so direct and encourage children in their learning. Daily risk assessments are carried out to ensure children's safety in the classroom and outdoor area. Although staff are generally vigilant and aware of children's welfare needs, some lack of management and organisation means that sometimes children are not fully focused on activities, and behaviour slips a little.

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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

Views of parents and carers

About two fifths of parents and carers returned questionnaires. A very large majority agree with the inspectors that the school is effectively led and managed and keeps their children safe, and that it ensures that they are well supported, make enough progress and are happy in school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Mary's CofE Primary 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 40 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 101 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	26	65	13	33	0	0	1	3
The school keeps my child safe	27	68	12	30	1	3	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	17	43	16	40	5	13	1	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	18	45	16	40	3	8	3	8
The teaching is good at this school	19	48	15	38	3	8	1	3
The school helps me to support my child's learning	19	48	14	35	5	13	1	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	23	58	16	40	0	0	1	3
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)	18	45	13	33	3	8	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	19	48	15	38	2	5	2	5
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	16	40	16	40	3	8	1	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	16	40	16	40	2	5	3	8
The school is led and managed effectively	25	63	9	23	2	5	2	5
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	23	58	15	38	1	3	1	3

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.



23 October 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Mary's CofE Primary School, Clymping, BN17 5QU

Thank you for taking part in the inspection. We spoke with some of you during our visit and you were interesting to talk to, polite and helpful. You spoke enthusiastically about enjoying school and all the things you take part in. St Mary's is a good school.

These are the things that the school does well.

- You work hard in lessons and make good progress.
- You all know how to keep fit and eat the right things.
- You are encouraged to play your part in the life of the school and to take responsibility for all the things you do.
- Freeflow activities encourage you to think for yourselves.
- The school takes good care of you and supports those who need additional help.
- Your parents and carers are encouraged to play their part in the life of the school and to support you in your learning.
- Your headteacher, staff and governors are doing a good job.

We have asked the school to work on the following things.

- The school has worked well to train staff to provide you with extra support. It must check that this support is working as well as it can.
- The school makes careful plans to help you do even better, and must also check that these are working successfully.
- Staff in the Reception class should ensure that children make the fullest use of the classroom and outside area for their play and learning. They know what they wish to do to make the Reception class better, and must draw up plans for this and ensure that they are carried out.

Thank you again for your help. You can do your bit to help by continuing to work hard in lessons and enjoying all that you do in school.

Yours faithfully

Peter Thrussell

Lead inspector

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