

St Mary's Church of England VA Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115700
Local Authority	
Inspection number	357800
Inspection dates	23–24 June 2010
Reporting inspector	Hazel Callaghan

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	285
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr Rebecca French
Headteacher	Steven Etherington
Date of previous school inspection	11 March 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors observed 15 lessons taught by 12 teachers and held meetings with staff, governors and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at the school's records of pupils' standards and progress, various policies related to safeguarding, the school development plan and curriculum plans. The 146 questionnaires returned by parents and carers were also scrutinised. The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- how well pupils are making progress in writing, particularly the boys, and in mathematics at Key Stage 2
- how effectively teaching and the curriculum meets the needs of different groups of pupils such as boys, the more-able and those new to learning English
- the effectiveness of the new senior leadership team and the governing body in leading the school forward.

Information about the school

St Mary's is larger than the average primary school. The vast majority of its pupils come from families of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils who are learning to speak English as an additional language is smaller than average, whereas the proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is slightly larger than average. The school has been successful in achieving Healthy Schools status and the Activemark award. There have been several changes to the senior leadership team and in the governing body over the last 18 months.

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

2

Main findings

St Mary's provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. The new senior leadership team, under the clear direction of the headteacher, is successful in moving the school forward at an increasingly rapid pace. Many aspects have already improved. The effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is now good; there is a rising trend in standards in Years 1 and 2 and an increasing pace to pupils' learning in most year groups. The positive strategies introduced to help pupils understand how well they are doing and how to improve are supporting pupils' aspirations and desire to do well. All these factors, together with the staff commitment to improvement and accurate self-evaluation practices, provide clear evidence of the school's good capacity for further development.

The school is strongly supported by parents and carers, who recognise the good levels of care and support provided by all staff. Many commented on how happy their children are at school and they are growing in confidence and maturity.

Pupils' personal development is good. Their academic standards are broadly in line with national averages, and improving. The groundswell of rising standards is coming from the Reception classes, where children's progress is now good. It is reaching through Key Stage 1 but has yet to be seen consistently up to Year 6. Weaknesses in writing, particularly for the boys in Years 1 and 2, have been addressed this year. Weaknesses in mathematics last year, particularly in Year 6, have also been largely resolved and standards here are also rising. The school has successfully tackled the inadequate progress in the past in Key Stage 2 and pupils are now making satisfactory overall progress.

The school has successfully introduced a range of strategies to support accurate assessment of pupils' work, which teachers use to inform their lesson plans and to set targets for pupils' next steps. This is beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' learning but teaching overall remains satisfactory. Although activities are now better matched to pupils' ages and abilities, they are not consistently effective in moving pupils' learning on at a good rate or in challenging pupils' thinking. In some cases, opportunities are missed to really engage slower learners through greater use of practical activities.

The curriculum has also been improved. Effective use is made of community links, both locally and abroad, to extend pupils' experiences. Positive links between subjects ensure that pupils' literacy, numeracy and computing skills are consolidated and further developed. The curriculum has been adapted well to motivate boys' interests and to meet the needs of the few pupils who are learning to speak English as an additional

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language and those pupils with specific learning difficulties. However, while there are clear expectations for the progress pupils should make each year, these are not always high enough to ensure good progress for all pupils, particularly in Key Stage 2. Good links with parents and carers, the local community, other agencies and schools all support the provision and pupils' learning, helping standards to rise.

The school has successfully developed a range of monitoring strategies to support accurate self-evaluation, and the senior leadership team and governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The school development plan is appropriately based on these evaluations with well-structured action plans. The criteria to help leaders, governors and staff to evaluate the impact of their work, however, are not clear enough to measure accurately how successfully they have been in terms of raising standards.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching and learning so it is at least good in all year groups, by ensuring that:
 - lesson activities are well matched to pupils' learning needs and all ability groups are challenged to do well
 - lessons always include enough practical activities, particularly in mathematics, to engage and maintain pupils' interest
 - the existing good practice is shared effectively across the school
- Improve the planning of the curriculum by building in more aspirational targets for the progress pupils should make each year at Key Stage 2.
- Develop precise, measurable criteria for evaluating progress towards improvement targets in the school development plan.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

There have been fluctuations in pupils' attainment for some years, with strengths and weaknesses in English, mathematics and science being evident at different times. Progress in Key Stage 2 has been inadequate and yet standards have still hovered around average levels, showing that pupils were capable of higher attainment. Progress is now improving and, during the inspection, there was clear evidence of pupils' better rates of learning. In most lessons observed, progress was at least satisfactory, and several highlights were noted in different classes. These examples of good progress were the result of teachers' imaginative activities and pupils' eagerness to learn. In one lesson in Year 5, the teacher introduced the pupils to a game called Kung Fu Punctuation, which required them to identify the different kinds of punctuation and demonstrate them with Kung Fu actions. This thoroughly engaged the interest and enthusiasm of boys and girls in the class and had the desired effect of consolidating their knowledge and awareness of correct punctuation.

In other classes, pupils showed the skills of cooperation and effective sharing of ideas so

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they made good progress. In many classes, pupils listened carefully, enthusiastically offered their answers and ideas and used 'the steps to success' strategy to help them complete their work successfully. This and other successful strategies are promoting steadily improving standards in Year 2. These good examples of learning are not, however, as widespread as they should be; activities do not always sufficiently challenge the more-able and are not always practical enough to ensure the good progress of the less able pupils, especially in mathematics. Behaviour in class and around the school is good and, even when lessons are a little slow, pupils behave sensibly.

Pupils get on well together and enjoy taking responsibility. School councillors in particular talked at length about the many different positive changes they had made, the school's good contribution to the local community and the exciting links with schools in other countries. Pupils show care for one another, and the school's ethos and strong relationships ensure that their spiritual, social moral and cultural awareness is well founded. Pupils' understanding of how to develop healthy lifestyles is also good, reflecting the Healthy School status and work to achieve the Activemark. Generally average standards in the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) and average attendance mean that pupils are satisfactorily prepared for their next stage of education and later life.

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	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	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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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How effective is the provision?

Recent improvements in the quality of teaching and the curriculum are increasing the rates of pupils' effective learning. The redesigned curriculum is resulting in more interesting activities that are engaging pupils' interests and motivating them to want to learn. This can be seen very effectively in the way boys are more interested in writing, particularly in Years 1 and 2, but expectations are not so high in Years 3 to 6. The recent purchase of ICT software and equipment has addressed concerns over the breadth of experiences offered to pupils in Key Stage 2 but ICT has yet to be fully integrated into the planning to pupils' support learning. A wide range of additional activities is extending pupils' interests and enhancing many aspects of their knowledge and skills. Teachers' use of assessment to identify clearly what pupils know and can do is helping to set targets, and pupils say they find this beneficial as it helps them to improve their work. The new assessment procedures are also supporting teachers' planning so that activities more accurately build on past learning. Although there is a better match of activities to pupils' learning needs, there is still too often a lack of challenge for the more-able, and those who find difficulty in mathematics are sometimes given tasks that are not sufficiently practical or well suited to their needs.

A strong emphasis on developing pupils' personal, social and health education is having a successful impact on their development. Consistent messages about how to develop healthy lifestyles and manage difficult situations, by building self-discipline and empathy for one another, are effective in developing pupils' life-skills. This, and the good levels of care, support and guidance provided by all staff, ensures that pupils feel safe and understand how to keep themselves safe. Relationships throughout the school are strong and there are effective systems to support vulnerable pupils and help families to access specialist support agencies. The school has good relationships with many outside groups who support both the staff and the pupils, including those in the early stages of learning to speak English, for example, and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
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	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

After a difficult period of change, the new senior leadership team is proving effective in moving the school forward. This has yet to result in consistently good teaching and

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learning, but the headteacher and deputy headteacher make a good team that is galvanising the commitment of the staff to improvement. They are well supported by the newly organised governing body, which evaluates its own work well and is also looking for ways to improve. Keeping pupils safe is high on the school's agenda and supervision is well organised. Safeguarding procedures are carried out in line with government requirements. Governors were quick to rectify an oversight identified during the inspection.

The school is a harmonious and happy community and staff effectively promote equality and mutual respect. Several parents and carers commented on the school's good work within the local community. For example, one said, 'My daughter has developed an increasing sense of respect, ownership and inclusion in our local community and the school community due to the school's continuing endeavours to be actively involved in fundraising and humanitarian environmental initiatives.' The school has appropriate plans to make links with schools in more culturally diverse areas so that pupils' awareness of modern multicultural British society is further developed.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	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	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children start in the Reception class with a range of skills and knowledge that are broadly at the levels expected for children of this age, but a significant group have weaknesses in their personal and social development and language skills. All make good progress across all the areas of learning.

Good teaching and an interesting range of activities enable children to develop well.

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There is a good balance of tasks led by an adult and opportunities for children to choose and develop their own activities. Most choose their resources with confidence and all work and play very happily with each other, sharing tools and equipment sensibly. The range of resources available stimulates their interest and children enjoy challenging themselves, as seen when a group found really large items to measure and were excited by the large numbers they could use. Children are proud of their successes; one group showed how they had written their own sentences with a capital letter, full stops and finger spaces. The large outside area is used well. It reflects the good quality learning environment inside the classroom, and provides a fun and safe area in which children can experiment and explore.

Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good and children are well cared for. The leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage is evaluative and looks for further ways to improve. Good links with parents and carers and the local pre-school groups are fostered well. Children's progress is monitored carefully and a thorough system of recording is used to develop a clear plan for each child's important next steps. The teachers and teaching assistants work together extremely well. Areas for further improvement are identified correctly, with the result that provision and outcomes are improving, especially in terms of boys' better language skills and creative 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 vast majority of parents and carers are very supportive of the school and feel that their children are doing well, enjoy school and are well cared for by all staff. One parent wrote, 'We know our child is left in safe hands and his needs are dealt with in a sensitive manner.'

A very small number of parents and carers had concerns about the behaviour of some of the pupils. The inspection team explored this concern and found that there have been difficulties in the past but that these have been mostly addressed and behaviour in the school is now good. Where there are difficulties, pupils say that the staff sort things out quickly and they feel safe 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 Church of England 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.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	85	58	59	40	2	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	85	58	61	42	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	63	43	72	49	8	5	2	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	65	45	73	50	5	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	72	49	62	42	7	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	77	53	64	44	4	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	69	47	76	52	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)	60	41	60	41	2	1	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	68	47	63	43	5	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	56	38	72	49	7	5	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	55	38	62	42	5	3	2	1
The school is led and managed effectively	66	45	68	47	4	3	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	84	58	56	38	3	2	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 June 2010

Dear Children

Inspection of St Mary's Church of England Primary School, Tetbury GL8 8BW

Thank you for making us so welcome and answering our questions when we visited you recently. You could see that you are proud of your school and what it does for you. We believe that you go to a school that is satisfactory at present but improving quickly.

Here are some of the things we liked best.

- You get a good start to your schooling in the Reception classes.
- You want to do well, and enjoy the fun activities you are given.
- You behave well. You are polite, friendly and helpful to everyone. You enjoy taking responsibility and have done lots of things to help the school to be a better place and to help people around the world.
- Your teachers work hard to make sure that your lessons are interesting and help you to know how to be successful in your activities.
- The school is led well by the headteacher and everyone works together as a strong team. There is a good partnership with your parents and carers and others who can help you to learn.
- The staff look after you well so you feel safe and happy.

Even though St Mary's has many good elements, we have asked your headteacher and staff to do some things to make it even better.

- Make sure that teaching is consistently good in all year groups and subjects
- Help you all make better progress in your work, but especially at Key Stage 2, so that standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science improve, by ensuring your activities make you think hard and cover more ground in your work.
- Help you all make better progress in your work, but especially at Key Stage 2, so that standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science improve, by ensuring your activities make you think hard and cover more ground in your work.
- Make sure that the staff design ways of measuring exactly how well they are doing in making the school even better.

You can do your bit to help by trying really hard to come to school whenever possible. Thank you again for making our time at St Mary's such a happy one.

Yours sincerely

Hazel Callaghan

Lead inspector

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