

St Mary's CofE Aided Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125166
Local Authority	Surrey
Inspection number	315175
Inspection dates	15 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Mr Peter Thrussell

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	5-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	199
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Gareth Roberts
Headteacher	Mr Paul Bull
Date of previous school inspection	08 December 2003
School address	Petworth Road Chiddingfold Godalming GU8 4UF
Telephone number	01428 683115
Fax number	01428 682294

Age group	5-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: achievement and standards, teaching and learning, and leadership and management, gathering evidence from lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and documents. Parents' questionnaires and discussions with children, governors and staff also contributed to the judgements. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

St Mary's is a one-form entry school, which serves a generally advantaged area. The majority of pupils come from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is generally below average.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The highly committed headteacher, ably assisted by his deputy, leadership team and governors, ensures a good quality of education for pupils. The pastoral care of pupils and their personal development are both outstanding. Excellent links with parents, the church, other schools and agencies contribute to this. Parents have very positive views about the school. One commented that, 'The atmosphere at St Mary's is friendly, caring and supportive, offering the children a very positive environment in which to learn'. Pupils feel extremely safe and secure at school, knowing that staff are there to help them if they have any concerns. Pupils say that anti-bullying week has helped to ensure that 'we have no bullying in school'. Year 6 pupils act responsibly as peer mediators, helping to sort out any minor squabbles. Pupils enjoy many things about school, shown in their above average attendance. They particularly enjoy using computers and the wide range of clubs available to them. They greatly value the trips they go on that provide first hand learning experiences. Many recall the pleasurable experiences of residential trips in Years 4, 5 and 6, which contribute much to pupils' social development. Year 6 pupils are looking forward to staying on a boat and taking part in water based activities. The school council takes its role seriously, knowing that it helps to make the school a better place. Links with local schools and sports clubs provide coaching for different sports. Pupils have a very clear understanding of the need to keep fit, eat healthily, and keep safe. Healthy school meals are prepared on site and many pupils take advantage of them. At the start of the day, all take part in the 'Activate' programme, 'which helps to get our brains working'. Behaviour is excellent, resulting in a harmonious school community and a strong eagerness to learn, backed up by a good, very well enriched curriculum.

At the end of Year 2, standards are well above average in reading, writing and mathematics. There is a relative weakness in writing, where a higher proportion of pupils than expected only just achieve average standards. Overall, progress throughout both Key Stages 1 and 2 is good, and, by the end of Year 6, pupils achieve well. Standards here are well above average in mathematics and significantly above average in English and science. There are relative weaknesses in writing and mathematics, where the proportions achieving higher levels, although above average, are not as high as in reading and science. Pupils with learning difficulties also make good progress due to the well-managed and focused support they receive. Further challenge is provided for gifted and talented pupils through some very good links with local schools and the workshops they provide. The school has identified its weaknesses in writing and mathematics and started to address them with some success. In writing, more emphasis is being placed on writing for a specific purpose, and linking this with learning in other subjects. For example, Year 6 pupils have been writing play scripts for the Snow Queen, comparing both the film and book of this story. They have eagerly designed and made headdresses and masks for their own performance, which they are in the process of filming. In mathematics, the profile of the subject has been raised through a week of mathematics activities and a closer look at the development of calculation skills. Given their very high level of basic skills and personal development, pupils are extremely well prepared for their future life and learning.

The school carefully monitors pupils' progress and sets challenging end-of-year targets for teachers to plan towards, and for pupils to aim for. As part of performance management, teachers are now more accountable for the progress pupils make throughout the year. This is helping to ensure that teachers look more closely at the day-to-day progress pupils make to ensure that future planning, particularly in writing and mathematics, continues to fully challenge all pupils. This practice, although starting to result in a greater consistency of good progress made by pupils, has yet to fully impact on all classroom practice. Nevertheless, teaching and learning overall are good. Lessons are very well prepared and managed, so little time is wasted. Questioning is used well to develop pupils' ideas and understanding. Interactive white boards, used by both staff and pupils, help to enliven lessons. Teaching assistants work well alongside teachers in their supporting role, although occasionally more effective use could be made of their time throughout lessons. Pupils are given good opportunities to assess the work they are doing, and are set individual targets to aim for. Most understand how targets can help them to improve their work, particularly when they have been involved in setting them and fully understand them.

The school development plan sets out appropriate areas for improvement, based on thorough monitoring and careful self-evaluation. It sets out actions to further raise achievement in writing and mathematics, particularly linking these with the improved use of assessment. The school is also reviewing the curriculum in order to develop more links between subjects so that learning becomes more challenging, interesting and purposeful. Leaders regularly monitor teaching and learning through looking at planning, observing lessons and sampling work. Consequently, weaknesses in teaching have been identified and appropriate support given. This helps to maintain good teaching. Given the improvements since the last inspection, for example in the improved library facilities and their use, and the growing success of recent actions, the school has a good capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children are extremely well provided for in the Foundation Stage. A very caring environment supports children in their learning. They enter Reception with a level of attainment above that expected for their age. They make very good progress here and, when they start in Year 1, the great majority are working well towards the goals expected of them. A significant proportion fully meet or exceed these goals. Very friendly links with parents and their confidence in the school mean that children quickly settle into school and learn the routines. This is further helped by opportunities for children and their parents to spend time in school, prior to starting school. Planning shows a very good balance between activities directed by staff, and times for children to explore and discover for themselves. Children are encouraged to make choices, and confidently maintain their concentration on their chosen activities. Planning further identifies points for observation and assessment, so that a thorough ongoing check is made and recorded of children's progress in the different areas of learning. The outside area is very well incorporated into children's learning, although a little restricted in size. There are plans to extend and develop this area, linking it with Year 1, to ensure further continuity of curriculum and learning with Key Stage 1.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make fuller use of assessment information to plan the next steps in pupils' learning, so that all make the best progress possible.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness in the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interest of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

All white boxes must be completed. The grey boxes are used wherever the inspection team has sufficient evidence to come to a secure judgement.

² IE - denotes that insufficient evidence was available to inspectors for a judgement to be made.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B



Letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection.

24 January 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Mary's CofE Aided Primary School, Godalming, GU8 4UF

I am writing to let you know what I found when I visited your school. Thank you for taking part in the inspection. I spoke with many of you during my visit and you were always interesting to talk to, very polite and helpful. You spoke very enthusiastically about enjoying school and all of the things you take part in. St Mary's is a good school with some outstanding features.

I liked these things the most.

- Children in Reception get an excellent start to their time in school.
- You work very hard and make good progress.
- You behave extremely well and enjoy your lessons.
- The school supports you well when you find learning difficult.
- The school makes sure that you are safe and very well looked after.
- You have a very good range of clubs to choose from and the residential trips in Years 4, 5 and 6 provide you with memorable experiences.
- You know the importance of eating the right things and staying fit and healthy. It was good to see you all, including the staff, involved in 'Activate'.
- You take your responsibilities very seriously. The school council and peer mediators are a great asset to the school.
- Your headteacher, staff and governors do a good job.

I have asked the school to work on the following. It keeps good records on how well you are doing and of the different levels at which you should be working. However, teachers must make the fullest use of this information when planning what you need to learn next. This will ensure that you are all challenged to do your very best and so make the best progress possible. You can help by continuing to work hard, although not forgetting to enjoy your time at school.

I did enjoy visiting your school and watching you learn.

Yours sincerely

Peter Thrussell
Lead Inspector