

St Mary's Church of England Primary School, Thornbury

Inspection report

Unique reference number	109263
Local authority	South Gloucestershire
Inspection number	377896
Inspection dates	22–23 March 2012
Lead inspector	Kerry Rochester

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	169
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Matt Wong
Headteacher	Avril Muirhead
Date of previous school inspection	11–12 July 2007
School address	Church Road Thornbury Bristol BS35 1HJ
Telephone number	01454 866760
Fax number	01454 866762
Email address	StMarysPrimaryThornbury.School@southglos.gov.uk

Age group	4–11
Inspection date(s)	22–23 March 2012
Inspection number	377896



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.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 assesses 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 0300 123 4234, or email 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 information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)
[Store St](#)
[Manchester](#)
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234
 Textphone: 0161 618 8524
 E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
 W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2012



Introduction

Inspection team

Kerry Rochester

Additional inspector

David Williams

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 20 lessons or part lessons taught by seven teachers. In addition, inspectors made shorter visits to classrooms to hear pupils read and look at books. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, governors and school leaders. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. Inspectors scrutinised planning, pupils' work and school documents including the self-evaluation and school development plans and arrangements for safeguarding children. Inspectors took account of the 94 questionnaires received from parents and carers, and those from staff and pupils.

Information about the school

This school is smaller than the average-sized primary school. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, and those who speak English as an additional language are well below the national average, as is the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. The percentage of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is much lower than in most schools. The school meets the current floor standards set by the government, which determines the minimum expectations for attainment and progress. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a Reception class. There is a breakfast club run on site. This is not managed by the governing body and did not form part of this inspection.

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	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	3

Key findings

- This is a satisfactory school. The main strengths are in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in the good attention to safety and behaviour. The school is not better than satisfactory overall, because teaching and its leadership are not leading to pupils' good achievement throughout the school.
- Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage, and make good progress, but in the rest of the school, progress is satisfactory.
- Teaching makes a satisfactory impact on pupils' achievement. There are examples of good practice, but teachers are not consistently making good use of assessment information and what they know pupils can already do, to pitch work at the correct level, particularly for the more able. They do not always make clear what it is pupils are intended to learn from the tasks set. Some opportunities are missed to include practice in reading, writing and mathematics skills in other subjects.
- Pupils behave well and attention to safety is good. The school has a caring and welcoming ethos where pupils feel safe. Pupils clearly enjoy coming to school as shown by their keen attendance and enthusiasm. The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well, enabling pupils to develop good social skills and gain in self-esteem.
- Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school is focused on accelerating pupils' progress in Years 1 to 6, but checks on the quality of teaching and learning are not yet used well enough to achieve this. The monitoring of teachers' performance has led to focused staff training which has had a satisfactory impact on improving teaching. The governing body provides committed support and has recently increased its checks on the school's work.

Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring

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

visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By July 2013, improve teaching and accelerate pupils' progress to good throughout the school in reading, writing and mathematics by:
 - ensuring all pupils receive tasks that provide the right level of challenge, including more-able pupils
 - making more effective use of assessment information when planning lessons
 - ensuring learning objectives are made clear to pupils and they understand how to achieve them
 - ensuring pupils are given more opportunities to practise and extend literacy and numeracy skills across a range of different subjects.

- Improve the leadership and management of teaching and learning by ensuring that checks on quality are rigorous and focused sharply on pupils' learning and their progress.

Main report**Achievement of pupils**

Children enter the school with skills and abilities that are at least in line with the expectations for their age. They settle happily to a good range of activities promoting early reading, writing and calculation. Children are happy and enthusiastic and enjoy sounding out and then blending words together to help read their books or write letters to place in the 'post box'. Clear routines and expectations with behaviour help the children to develop enthusiastic attitudes to learning. A good range of activities both in class and in the outside area develops creativity, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development. Consequently, children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and reach above-average standards by the time they leave the Reception class.

Most parents and carers feel their children are making good progress. Although they get off to a good start in the Reception class, inspection evidence shows that through the rest of the school, most pupils make satisfactory progress. Attainment at Year 2 and Year 6 is above average. In Years 1 to 6, pupils responded best when lessons moved at a brisk pace and teachers posed questions that prompted pupils to think hard and make decisions. This was shown in a Year 5 lesson where pupils predicted what would happen during the various stages of making bread. Through well-directed questioning by the class teacher, they responded with great enthusiasm. Working well with each other, they were able to agree and justify their predictions. These kinds of suitably challenging activities for all pupils and well-paced learning are not yet commonplace enough across the school.

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

Standards in reading by the end of Key Stage 1 are above average. Pupils can read fluently and can use their knowledge of the alphabet to find information. They read unfamiliar words confidently, drawing on their good knowledge of how letters link together. By the end of Key Stage 2, standards in reading are also above average. Year 6 pupils have good reading skills and enjoy reading for a wide range of purposes such as research, as well as simply for pleasure.

In the last academic year, pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 in mathematics was high but this is not consistently the case. From pupils' starting points on entry to Year 1, progress in mathematics over time has not always been fast enough. The school has taken successful action to improve this, so that progress has now improved to at least satisfactory in mathematics through the school.

Pupils from different ethnic backgrounds, and pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, make progress in line with their peers. The small number of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs also make satisfactory progress. These pupils are given additional help and guidance which enable them to work cooperatively and stay focused on their work.

Quality of teaching

Almost all parents and carers believe their children are well taught. The inspection team found that teaching is more typically satisfactory, although good in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in some lessons. Teaching, overall, results in pupils currently in the school making satisfactory progress. In lessons there is usually a good climate for learning because teachers guide pupils to develop their thinking skills by good questioning. When teaching is at its best, relationships are strong and teachers ensure that learning is fun. They use a range of skills effectively to allow pupils to discuss and develop ideas and this helps pupils to develop confidence. For instance, in a Year 5 English lesson, pupils enjoyed listening to a recording of an advertisement made by pupils from another school. Discussion focused on the use of persuasive language in advertising, before pupils spent time devising and recording advertisements of their own. They gained much in understanding how advertisements are constructed as well as in speaking confidently and presenting persuasive arguments convincingly. In other instances when teaching is at its strongest, it is because teachers skilfully build on pupils' prior learning and make good use of available assessment data to plan captivating lessons. This highly effective practice is not yet established in all classes.

In some lessons, teachers do not ensure that all pupils, particularly higher ability pupils, are given tasks that provide sufficient challenge. This slows progress. In some classes, learning objectives do not make clear to pupils what they will learn and how they will know if they have succeeded. The planned curriculum makes a satisfactory impact on learning but there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to practise and apply the skills they learn in English and mathematics lessons. Teaching develops spiritual, social, moral and cultural development well. A good religious education lesson, where pupils talked about the purpose of Easter symbols, prompted

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

interesting spiritual and social discussions and gave them the opportunity to reflect on the true meaning of Easter and of the importance of religious festivals in different faiths.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The school gives prominence to its set of Christian values, which include love, cooperation, joyfulness, trust and respect. These are displayed around the school and reinforced in classes and assemblies. Pupils are respectful, well mannered, caring of one another and typically have good attitudes to learning. They enjoy school, attend well and are punctual. Most parents, carers and pupils confirm that behaviour is good. A very small minority of parents and carers, responding to the questionnaire, had concerns about behaviour but inspectors and pupils judged it to be typically good. Pupils are polite and welcoming, emulating the excellent adult role models in the school. Pupils' behaviour and their enthusiasm are major reasons why they draw as much learning as possible from the teaching. Good behaviour was evident in the vast majority of lessons, assemblies and playtimes observed during the inspection. The school's behaviour logs and discussions with pupils supported this being the general everyday picture for the school.

Nearly all of the parents and carers who returned the questionnaire agreed that their children are safe in the school. Pupils also stated that they felt safe. The inspection found that pupils have a good understanding of safety issues. Pupils say that bullying of any kind is rare. They are taught about different forms of bullying and understand that this extends beyond name-calling and physical bullying. The pupils are aware of risks, for example in using the internet, and know how to keep themselves safe. The strong climate of care in the school means that pupils are confident that the teachers would act quickly if bullying occurred, to put things right.

Leadership and management

Leaders and managers share an ambition to improve the school and raise achievement. Self-evaluation is accurate and the school improvement plan is an effective working document. Leaders' concerns about the teaching and learning of mathematics have been successfully tackled through focused staff training and effective improvements made. Stronger procedures are now in place to better analyse and track the progress of different groups of pupils. Strengths in areas such as behaviour, the Early Years Foundation Stage and the welfare of pupils have been maintained and built on since the last inspection. Inspection evidence also confirms the school's view that actions taken to improve communication with parents and carers has improved since the previous inspection. These factors and successes confirm the school's capacity to improve further.

All staff are working together, taking responsibility for pupils' progress and maintaining detailed charts of progress to ensure no pupil falls behind. This process is relatively recent but is already making a positive impact in identifying precisely where support and interventions need to be targeted. The satisfactory progress that

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

pupils make overall indicates that the school works satisfactorily in providing equal opportunities for all pupils to learn and to take part in all the curriculum offers. School leaders and staff ensure that there is no discrimination.

Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. There are regular opportunities in lessons and during the school day for reflection on the values of a democratic society and to learn about the traditions and cultures of others. Consequently, pupils have a good understanding of right and wrong and develop positive attitudes towards learning. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the programme of enrichment activities that includes trips and sports clubs. Overall, the curriculum is satisfactory. It has breadth and balance, and promotes learning, but does not fully exploit opportunities for pupils to use reading, writing and mathematics skills in other curriculum subjects.

The quality of teaching and learning is monitored by members of the senior management team. However, this is not yet sufficiently focused on pupils' progress. This has already been identified by the school and plans are in hand to ensure that monitoring is used as a more effective tool to bring about more rapid improvements in pupils' achievement. The governing body has a core of committed and knowledgeable members, some of whom are confident and effective at holding the school to account. School leaders and governors fulfil their statutory duties in ensuring that child protection, safeguarding and welfare requirements all meet statutory requirements.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



26 March 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Mary's Church of England Primary School, Thornbury BS35 1HJ

Thank you for the warm welcome that you gave us when we visited your school and for your responses to the questionnaire. We greatly enjoyed talking to many of you and listening to some of you read. Your school is satisfactory, which means some things are done well and others could be better.

Here are some of the best things:

- You clearly enjoy school and you behave well. You are friendly and respectful.
- The staff look after you well so you feel safe and happy. This encourages you to come to school regularly and on time, so that your attendance is above average.
- You want to do well and you are eager to learn.

What I have asked your school to do now:

- Make sure your teachers challenge you, especially those of you who find learning easy, and use what they know about you to give you work that is just right for you to make good progress in all your lessons
- Make sure teachers make it clear to you what it is you are expected to learn in lessons
- Give you more opportunities to use your writing, reading and mathematics skills in other subjects
- Check regularly that all of these things are working as well as they should to help you to do even better.

Your headteacher, governing body and all the teachers are keen to help the school improve. You can help too by continuing to work hard all of the time and telling the teacher if the work is too easy. Thank you again for all of your help and best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Kerry Rochester
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. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone **0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.**