

# St Mary's Walthamstow CofE Voluntary Aided Primary School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	103092
<b>Local Authority</b>	Waltham Forest
<b>Inspection number</b>	355312
<b>Inspection dates</b>	22–23 March 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Michael Bartleman

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	234
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Jo Bridger
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ms Beverley Hall
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	14 January 2008
<b>School address</b>	The Drive Walthamstow London E17 3BN
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<b>Email address</b>	head@st-marys-coe.waltham.sch.uk

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 21 lessons, observing 10 teachers. Meetings were held with the Chair of the Governing Body, senior and middle managers, and parents and carers at the start and end of the school day. Inspectors spoke to two groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at improvement plans and key policy documents. There were 106 parental questionnaires received and analysed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How effectively the curriculum is developed to raise attainment.
- The effectiveness of the quality of teaching in promoting learning and progress.
- The effectiveness of the governing body and leaders and managers at all levels in tackling areas for improvement.
- The impact of care, guidance and support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

## Information about the school

This is an over-subscribed, average sized primary school, serving an ethnically diverse community in London. The largest groups of pupils are of White British, Black Caribbean or Black African heritages, with the rest coming from a range of other backgrounds. Although an average proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language, few are at the early stages of acquiring English. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average, the majority of these having moderate learning difficulties or speech and language difficulties. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average.

St Mary's School joined with neighbouring St Saviour's Primary School to form a soft federation, with an executive headteacher covering both schools and an acting headteacher at St Mary's. The school has achieved the International Schools Award. A breakfast club and an after-school club managed by private providers run every day; this provision is inspected separately.

**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**

**1**

## Main findings

Key to the success of this good school is the high priority given to promoting pupils' personal development and academic achievement. The school is highly inclusive. Pupils of all backgrounds and abilities thrive because they feel safe and well cared for and they enjoy the rich and exciting range of activities provided for them in and out of lessons. They behave well. The school engages extremely well with parents and carers, who are overwhelmingly supportive. As one put it: 'I believe that the teachers genuinely care about the children and the school. My son is progressing well and responds well to his teacher.'

The quality of teaching is good. Teachers make good use of assessment information to plan lessons that are fast paced and include a variety of relevant and exciting tasks that are well matched to individual needs. As a result, pupils are engrossed in their learning and are able to work independently, helping and supporting each other. The curriculum provides a wealth of memorable experiences, is highly relevant to the pupils it supports and has a strong impact on outcomes, but does not yet take sufficient account of pupils' interests. These experiences make a very strong contribution to pupils' excellent spiritual, moral and social development.

When children first start school, their level of skills is below that typically found for their age. They get off to a flying start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and make good, although somewhat uneven, progress across the school so that, by Year 6, attainment is above average. Levels are rising, although fewer pupils attain the higher levels at Key Stage 1. Work in books and lessons, and the school's assessments of performance, show that pupils currently in Year 6 are making good progress and are on track to maintain above-average standards. Inspectors looked closely at the learning of potentially vulnerable pupils, and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including some with significant needs. This analysis revealed that they make exceptional progress, which is a direct result of the high-quality care and support they receive.

Under the excellent leadership of the headteacher, senior staff have an accurate and perceptive view of the school's performance. They keep a close check on how well all groups of pupils are learning, so that they can provide a boost when necessary. Regular checks are made on the quality of lessons, and tests and other assessments are evaluated thoroughly to identify what can be improved. Staff share this drive for improvement and, consequently, pupils benefit from teaching that is consistently good and, occasionally, outstanding. The governing body supports the school extremely well and has ensured that statutory requirements are met. It has fully developed its role in monitoring school improvements and self-evaluation. Staff take full responsibility in leading aspects of school development and are fully involved in evaluating the success of initiatives. Consequently, improvement strategies have been highly effective in bringing about rapid improvements

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in every aspect of the school's work. This demonstrates the school's excellent capacity for sustained improvement.

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

- Increase the number of pupils attaining the higher levels in all subjects by the end of Key Stage 1.
- Build on the significant improvements in attainment in English and mathematics by:
  - increasing the percentage of consistently outstanding teaching to 50% by December 2011
  - extending the good practice in place to further raise rates of progress, particularly in writing
  - extending the curriculum to fully exploit pupils' prior learning and interests.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Good behaviour and highly positive attitudes to learning ensure that pupils make at least good, and sometimes excellent, progress in their lessons. Pupils get on well with each other, with their teachers and other adults in their classes and enjoy school very much. Well-planned lessons run smoothly and ensure that pupils are engaged and motivated by the activities provided. National assessments and the work of current pupils show that attainment in Year 2 is broadly average but continuing to rise. Pupils make good progress across the school, with an increasing number making outstanding progress, particularly in reading and mathematics. Although the school's tracking shows there is some uneven progress particularly in writing, staff quickly identify any pupils at risk of underachieving and give them the extra help they need.

In a good topic lesson, there was a buzz of excitement and pupils could be heard giving each other advice about how best to use descriptive writing on the Second World War, stimulated by pictures. The pupils showed a good depth of knowledge and were able to talk using subject-specific knowledge. In another lesson, younger pupils were challenged to work independently and to develop instructional writing about 'balloon cars'. As a result of the well-structured preparation and modelling by the class teacher, all were able to complete the task successfully. This was further developed with the instructions being used by another class to make the cars. Teachers' feedback is good and has an excellent impact on improving outcomes. Pupils' books show that pupils reflect on teachers' comments made and put advice into practice. They know the level at which they are working and are clear about what they need to do to make progress.

Pupils have a good understanding about what keeps them safe and how this links with leading a healthy lifestyle. They speak knowledgeably about the dangers of smoking, for example, and how eating healthy food is important. Pupils know what to do if they have a concern and they talk warmly about the staff. Pupils assume a variety of responsibilities in school, for example as monitors, buddies and school and learning councillors, and take pride in this. All these factors demonstrate good preparation for the next stage of education. Attendance levels have been above average in recent years, but the rate is falling due to the high number of holidays taken by some in term time. The school's core

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values of respect, caring, forgiveness, truth, equality, faith, and wisdom are at the heart of its work and contribute well to the outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural outcomes. Pupils raise funds for local, national and international causes. They have an excellent understanding of a wide range of cultures.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<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	1
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>1</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>1</b>

<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

## How effective is the provision?

Good teaching ensures that pupils of all abilities progress well. A good proportion of outstanding teaching was seen during the inspection, matching the school's own monitoring. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are high. A considerable strength is the way that teachers keep a check on pupils' understanding during lessons. They pose challenging questions, draw the class together regularly to check on pupils' progress, and use a wide range of strategies to enable them to show what they can do. Pupils contribute enthusiastically, knowing that their efforts will be valued. Teachers thoughtfully evaluate the success of pupils' learning and use this information systematically to plan the next lesson. Teaching assistants support well during individual and group work. Staff provide pupils with high-quality verbal and written feedback which ensures that pupils have a good understanding of their next steps.

The school's curriculum is good and is having a real impact on raising achievement. The 'creative learning journey' facilitates skill development through a number of central themes. This ensures that learning becomes more meaningful and pupils can, increasingly,

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make links between subjects. Many themes begin with a 'wow' factor to motivate pupils and engage them immediately. For example, during a Second World War day, pupils made gas masks, designed an Anderson shelter and used computers to crop pictures onto their designs, bringing them to life. Enrichment weeks and whole-school topics motivate pupils and their families well; for example, art week enabled pupils to develop their talents, connect with their cultural heritage and make effective links within the local community.

Excellent care, guidance and support for pupils are based on a commitment to meeting the individual needs of every pupil and their family. Those with moderate learning difficulties and speech and language difficulties are provided with effective support, and extensive links with external agencies are highly beneficial and enhance provision. The move to the next school for Year 6 pupils is very well organised and supported. Parents and carers agree, with one writing: '... after attending my son's parents' evening, I was overjoyed with his progress and how quickly he has calmed his behaviour.' Every step is taken to ensure that pupils, including those who find learning difficult or who are potentially vulnerable, are able to learn in a safe and secure environment. Close checks on pupils' learning ensure that extra support is well targeted, timely and very effective.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	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?

All staff share the headteacher's single-mindedness, drive and ambition to provide the very best for pupils, as is shown by the school's improvement since the previous inspection. Staff 'go the extra mile' to provide high-quality learning experiences, and ensure that all pupils, whatever their backgrounds or abilities, are fully included in school life and are able to succeed. Discrimination of any sort is not tolerated and pupils feel that, were it to occur, it would be tackled swiftly. Governors have an excellent understanding of their strategic role and have appropriate systems to gather information about the school's performance, which they use to hold senior leaders to account. They fulfil their statutory role well. There are very secure systems to safeguard pupils. Close checks are made on the suitability of adults to work with children, risks are assessed robustly and the security of the school site is reviewed regularly.

The school has established very strong links with parents, and these have a positive impact on pupils' learning and well-being. Parents have opportunities to experience work in the classrooms with their children or develop a greater understanding of the work of the school through workshops and open days. The excellent array of partnership links has a highly positive impact on the opportunities provided by the school to enhance learning. Partnerships with other schools in the local area, other areas of the United Kingdom and

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abroad have ensured that pupils understand what life is like in regions other than their own. The school is acutely aware of the progress of different groups of pupils. Consequently, it is able to put in finely tuned support to ensure equal opportunities for all to do as well as possible.

Relationships are especially productive with parents and carers whose children have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Links with outside agencies are used extremely well to support these and other pupils in need. Support for families is strong, too, with learning opportunities being developed beyond the school day. The learning mentor has been very effective in developing this link. The school has a very clear understanding of its own and the local community, and promotes community cohesion extremely well. Impact is evaluated thoughtfully. International links are strong and are reflected in the school's international award.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
<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>1</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>1</b>
<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>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

'We have been very pleased with our child's progress. We are very impressed with the way the children come to school and how we are involved at the start of the day.' This comment from a parent or carer sums up the good quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Good induction procedures ensure that children settle quickly, and excellent partnerships are established with parents and carers. The curriculum is well planned and well resourced, with opportunities for children to explore the world around them both indoors and outside. During the inspection, Reception children were excited and motivated to engage in all aspects of learning when exploring a muddy area outside, which promoted good progress in their communication skills and in extending their vocabulary. Through this kind of activity, most children make good progress through all areas of learning. In 2010, most children moved into Year 1 with the skills expected for

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their age. This is a direct reflection of improved provision which is becoming increasingly effective. Children are very happy and secure and behave well. They learn to share and play together well.

Staff model and reinforce language well; this is particularly beneficial to those children with speech and language difficulties or those at an early stage of learning English. Children's progress is checked regularly to make sure that they are on target to meet the challenging goals set for them. Early assessments identify those children who need additional support effectively. Staff encourage children to make choices for themselves from the wide range of activities available, but do not encourage greater independence as much as they might do. Adults are skilled at supporting children's learning through play. They join in and encourage children to use new vocabulary and help them to understand new concepts. The leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding, with rigorous self-evaluation and data analysis driving improvements. Safeguarding is well managed and given a high priority.

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

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
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	1

## Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers have exceptionally positive views of the school. Almost all of those who replied to the questionnaire agreed that their children enjoy school and are safe. They praise especially the support and commitment of the staff, the promotion of values and the 'community feel' and agree that the school meets their child's particular needs. There is particular commendation for the quality of leadership and management and the high quality of teaching, for example, with one stating: 'I know my child is comfortable, supported and enjoys school with his friends.' A few parents expressed concerns over staff and leadership changes, communication and lack of competitive sporting activities, which were raised with the headteacher.

## 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 VA 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 106 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 234 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	75	71	29	27	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	73	69	31	29	1	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	50	47	54	51	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	46	43	52	49	2	2	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	57	54	46	43	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	53	50	46	43	4	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	41	39	61	58	3	3	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)	37	35	63	59	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	50	47	47	44	2	2	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	54	51	49	46	2	2	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	31	29	66	62	2	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	52	49	50	47	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	63	59	40	38	1	1	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 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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## 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 pupils' 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.**



24 March 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of St Mary's CofE VA Primary School, London, E17 4EB**

Many thanks for the welcome you gave to me and my colleagues when we visited the school for its recent inspection. We enjoyed talking with you and seeing all that you do. We particularly liked seeing how much the younger children enjoyed seeing the theatre group that came to visit you and to hear how proud you all are of your school.

Our inspection has judged that the school gives you a good quality of education. You make good progress and the standards that you reach in English and mathematics are rising steadily because of the good teaching you receive. We were impressed by your good behaviour and the care you show for each other. You concentrate well and enjoy your lessons and all the opportunities that are provided for you within the 'creative learning journey' and the exciting visits you go on. We were impressed by how well you learn independently and the way in which you help each other in lessons. Your teachers provide lessons that are exciting and they care for you extremely well, so that you feel safe. You make a good contribution to your school and local community and show exceptional understanding and respect for the beliefs and cultures of others. You told us how fortunate you feel to be part of such a diverse community and we agree. We know you understand how important it is to attend school regularly and on time so that you learn well.

The outstanding leaders of the school are working hard to make sure you learn well and develop well as young people. We have asked them to make sure that you make outstanding progress in all classes, from the Reception to Year 6, so that more pupils reach the higher levels at the end of Year 2 and to use your interests within what you learn. You can help them by continuing to work hard and attending regularly and promptly. I wish you every success for the future

Yours sincerely

Mike Bartleman

Lead inspector

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