

St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	102528
Local authority	Hounslow
Inspection number	376730
Inspection dates	24–25 April 2012
Lead inspector	Madeleine Gerard

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	273
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jacqui Corley
Headteacher	Farley Marsh
Date of previous school inspection	28 March 2007
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Age group	3–11
Inspection date(s)	24–25 April 2012
Inspection number	376730



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Introduction

Inspection team

Madeleine Gerard

Additional inspector

Nicholas West

Additional inspector

Margaret Wolf

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 22 lessons or parts of lessons, taught by 12 teachers, and held meetings with groups of pupils, staff and members of the governing body. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line Parent View survey in planning the inspection. They observed the school's work, looked at work in pupils' books, and tracking data showing pupils' attainment and progress. The school's development plans and records for safeguarding pupils were also seen. The inspectors considered responses to questionnaires received from 169 parents and carers, 99 pupils in Years 3 to 6, and 19 staff.

Information about the school

This is a slightly larger-than-average primary school with Early Years Foundation Stage provision for children in one part-time Nursery class and one Reception class. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is above average. A higher proportion of pupils than average speaks English as an additional language. Few of these pupils are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is much lower than average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The school has exceeded the current floor standards, which are minimum standards for attainment and progress expected by the government. The school has had three changes of headteacher since the previous inspection. The current headteacher joined the school in April 2011.

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

Key findings

- This is a good school. It is not yet outstanding because there is some variability in the rates of pupils' learning and progress between classes. Regular monitoring of teaching by senior leaders and managers ensures the school has an accurate view of provision. However, some middle leaders are not as fully involved in monitoring teacher and staff performance and securing further improvements to teaching and pupils' achievement. As a result, a few inconsistencies remain.
- Pupils' achievement is good. Pupils make good progress to reach above average levels of attainment by the end of Year 6. They reach particularly high standards in English. Children's outcomes are good in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The school works effectively to meet pupils' specific needs. All groups of pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, learn and progress well.
- Teaching is good through the school. Work in lessons is matched well to pupils' learning needs and tasks are appropriately challenging. Occasionally, the pace of learning slows because teachers' explanations to the whole class take up too much time. There are a few inconsistencies in the time and emphasis teachers give to helping pupils use teachers' marking, feedback and their individualised learning targets to improve progress further.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and behave well in lessons and around the school. They have a good awareness of how to keep themselves safe, for example when using computers and crossing the road.
- Good leadership and management have maintained the school's good overall effectiveness since the previous inspection. Proportions of pupils reaching above average standards in assessments the end of Year 6 have increased. Together with recent well-selected developments to the provision for mathematics, this shows the effective leadership of teaching and management of performance.

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

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the pace of pupils' learning through the school further by next academic year by:
 - ensuring pupils are set independent tasks as early as possible in lessons
 - enabling pupils in all classes to systematically take account of teachers' guidance on how to improve their work and take responsibility for checking their progress against personalised targets.
- By January 2013, develop the role of middle leaders in checking the quality of teaching and learning to ensure that their monitoring contributes more effectively to improving pupils' achievement.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

All groups of pupils, including pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, make good progress and achieve well. From starting points that are those expected for three-year-olds when they join the Nursery, pupils reach above average attainment by the end of Year 6. Children make good gains in their learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Pupils' attainment in reading is average at the end of Key Stage 1, and above average in writing and mathematics. By the time pupils leave the school, their attainment in reading improves to above average. Pupils are enthusiastic to learn. They work quickly when they are set tasks to do and concentrate well on the activities in class. This was illustrated in a mathematics lesson for older pupils where they developed their understanding of probability. They worked efficiently in pairs to identify the key mathematical language to use when talking about the likelihood of something happening. During independent work, pupils thought hard and worked purposefully to complete all the tasks they were set. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs worked hard with the additional adult to understand and use the key vocabulary. They enjoyed rolling dice to explore the chance of rolling different numbers and as a result made good progress in their learning.

Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are keen to do well. They appreciate opportunities to work with teachers and additional adults in lessons and in individual or small group sessions outside the classroom to increase their literacy and numeracy skills. This helps them to keep up and do well. Pupils who speak English as an additional language also benefit from additional sessions to boost their English speaking, reading and writing skills. Higher attaining pupils are motivated to work hard by the stretching tasks that teachers set them. For example, in an English lesson where pupils were studying a story from Ancient Greece, higher attaining pupils rapidly progressed to answer challenging questions about the language in a written text. The Ofsted inspection questionnaires indicate that most parents and carers were confident that their children are making good progress and that their needs are met. Inspection findings support this view.

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

Quality of teaching

Teachers use a variety of resources to capture pupils' interest and enable pupils to take an active part in lessons. For example, children practising and developing their knowledge of letters and the sounds they make (phonics) in the Reception class thoroughly enjoyed selecting letter cards to answer the teacher's questions. They were observed eagerly taking responsibility for handing out the resources. They enthusiastically counted how many more were needed so that every child in the class had a set of cards. Staff in the Early Years Foundation Stage create an environment where children develop good personal and social skills, grow in confidence and are happy. Home visits by staff before children join the school help them to settle quickly. In the survey, one parent of a child in the Nursery typically commented, 'Our child has settled in well and has a good rapport with his teachers.' There is an appropriate balance of adult-led tasks and opportunities for children to choose tasks for themselves.

The school tracks the progress of individual pupils and teachers use the information to ensure pupils are suitably challenged in their learning. Teachers and additional adults ably support disabled pupils and those with special education needs in small group sessions in lessons to help them keep up. Relationships are positive and encouraging. Planned activities, tailored to their needs, help them to make good progress. Marking and individual target setting are often used effectively to make clear to pupils what they should do to improve their work. In a few classes, there are not sufficient opportunities for pupils to respond to teachers' comments about their work and to take responsibility for knowing their individual targets to promote their progress. Developments to the English curriculum ensure pupils write regularly at length in a variety of different styles and have daily opportunities to practise their independent reading skills. Similar enhancements to the teaching of phonics in Key Stage 1 are not yet as consistently established. Recent well-targeted developments to the mathematics curriculum help make lessons relevant and interesting. Teachers usually ensure that explanations of new learning are clear, but occasionally these are overly long so the pace of learning drops. In the Ofsted questionnaire, most parents and carers felt that their children are well taught at the school, a view endorsed by inspection findings. In the survey for pupils in Years 3 to 6, almost all confirmed that they feel they are well taught at the school and that the school helps them to do as well as they can.

The planned curriculum enables pupils to learn about a variety of faiths and cultures. Pupils speak enthusiastically about recent visits to a temple and a mosque. Charity fundraising and opportunities for older pupils to act as buddies to children in the Reception class and pupils in Year 1 foster pupils' caring attitudes and social skills. Pupils' musical talents are extended through the school and particularly in Year 3, where all pupils learn to play the recorder, and in Years 4 and 5, where they learn to play the clarinet. Outings to a wide variety of local places of interest bring the curriculum to life and residential visits, for example to an activity centre in Surrey in Year 5, promote pupils' independence and self-confidence. Extra-curricular clubs including gardening, choir and dance, are popular.

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Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils from diverse backgrounds get on well together. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes make a good contribution to their own learning in lessons and the friendly atmosphere around the school. Pupils respond promptly to reminders from staff about the behaviour that is expected. Most parents and carers who responded to the Ofsted inspection survey are confident that behaviour is good at the school, although a few parents and carers feel that lessons are occasionally disrupted by bad behaviour. Most pupils in their survey confirmed that behaviour is good in lessons all or most of the time. A few parents and carers did not agree that incidents of bullying are dealt with effectively. Pupils know and understand that bullying can take many forms. They say there is occasional name calling by some, which is usually dealt with swiftly and effectively by staff. Discussions with pupils and their responses to the questionnaires indicate that they feel safe and valued in school. Pupils enjoy taking responsibility as lunchtime play leaders. Road safety and anti-bullying events, visitors from the local emergency services, as well as advice on travelling on public transport for pupils in Year 6, help pupils to develop a strong awareness of how to keep themselves safe from harm. Pupils' attendance is consistently above average.

Leadership and management

Leaders, managers and members of the governing body have worked successfully to maintain the quality of the school's work and pupils' achievement since the previous inspection. Together, they have sustained good behaviour and pupils' attendance rates. Improved challenge for higher attaining pupils in lessons has increased the proportion of pupils reaching above average levels in English and mathematics. Leaders, managers and members of the governing body ensure the curriculum is well matched to the needs of all groups of pupils and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is consistently and successfully promoted. The new headteacher has a clear understanding of the school's performance and is already raising the staff's expectations further about what pupils can achieve. Supported by well-targeted training and professional development, staff are working together with a shared vision to enhance the curriculum further and raise pupils' academic outcomes. The school tackles discrimination and promotes equality well. Pupils are known well as individuals and staff work hard to help them to prepare for the next stage in their education, so that rates of learning and progress are good for all groups of pupils. All these strengths reflect the school's capacity to improve further. Although senior staff monitor aspects of the school well, middle leaders are not sufficiently involved in checking the impact of key actions to secure further improvements to the consistency of teaching. The school site is well maintained and arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements; staff have a robust knowledge of procedures to safeguard pupils' welfare and safety.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	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 to 31 December 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.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
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 April 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School, Isleworth TW7 7EE

Thank you for your friendly welcome and for helping the inspectors when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed talking to you all and listening to what you had to say. This letter tells you about the judgements that we reached during our visit.

St Mary's is a good school. The youngest children get off to a good start in the Nursery and Reception classes. You make good progress through the rest of the school and reach higher standards compared to other pupils nationally by the end of Year 6. Those of you who need additional help are well supported by the adults in school, so you make good progress. You behave well and are keen to learn. You told us that you particularly enjoy all the interesting outings, visits and visitors that the school organises for you. You have a good awareness of how to keep yourselves safe from harm, and almost all of you who completed the survey told us that you feel safe in school. You attend school very regularly.

To help you do even better, we have asked that teachers set you tasks to do on your own more often, or in small groups, as early as possible in lessons. When teachers give you written advice and guidance to help you to improve your work, we would like the school to ensure that you always read and follow it carefully. This will help you make even faster progress. All of you can help by remembering your individual learning targets and checking regularly that you are meeting them. We have also asked the school's leaders and managers to make even more checks on the quality of the school's work so that they help you make even faster progress. All of you can help further by continuing to work hard and attending school very regularly.

Finally, I would like to thank you again and wish you well in the future.

Yours sincerely

Madeleine Gerard
Lead inspector

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