



St Mary's Island Church of England (Aided) Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 132056
LEA Medway
Inspection number 282282
Inspection dates 28 June 2006 to 29 June 2006
Reporting inspector Don Mason AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Island Way West
School category	Voluntary aided		St Mary's Island
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Chatham, Kent ME4 3ST
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01634 891050
Number on roll	295	Fax number	01634 856459
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Cannon John Saunders
Date of previous inspection	22 January 2001	Headteacher	Mrs Sharon Day

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Pupils enter the school with broadly average attainment. Approximately 50 percent of pupils live on the island and the remainder commute to school. They come from a variety of backgrounds. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is very low and the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD) is average. Approximately 16 percent of the pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. The number of pupils who arrive and leave the school during the school year is much higher than average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

The school provides an acceptable standard of education. However, because leadership and management are unsatisfactory, the school's overall effectiveness is inadequate. The school does not share this view and judges overall effectiveness and leadership and management as good.

Standards and achievement in national tests are average overall, representing satisfactory progress from pupils' average standards on entry. Quality and standards are also satisfactory in the Foundation Stage. The school has made good progress in raising achievement in English. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. However, lower and higher attaining pupils do not always make the progress they should, especially in mathematics and science. This is because teachers make insufficient use of assessment information in their planning. The support available from teaching assistants is not fully utilised. However, pupils with LDD make satisfactory progress overall because of the focused support they receive in small groups.

The curriculum is satisfactory and enriched by a wide range of visits, events and sporting activities. The good personal development is reflected in pupils' positive attitudes. They respond well to the many opportunities to take on additional responsibilities. The improvement in English is due mainly to the work of the very effective subject leader. Overall, the leadership of the school has focused too much on this one area. It has not been rigorous enough in monitoring its work, ensuring that improvements are applied consistently across the school, and checking their impact on pupil achievement. Senior staff are not yet working as a united team taking all staff along with them and their expectations of what the school can achieve are not high enough. Governors are aware of the difficulties but have not as yet found a way of resolving them. Although the school has the capacity to improve further, it does not have the capacity to reach its full potential because of weaknesses at senior management level. The school therefore does not provide satisfactory value for money.

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to leadership and management.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that all leaders and managers work as a team and are fully committed to implementing agreed strategies to improve teaching and learning and to raise standards for all pupils.
- Use assessment information in teachers' planning to provide appropriate work for groups of pupils of different abilities.
- Ensure that there are rigorous monitoring procedures in place to check the impact of improvement measures on pupils' learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' achievement and standards are satisfactory in all year groups. In Reception, pupils have frequent opportunities to choose from a range of well-structured activities which enable them to make good progress in their social development. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2 and enter Key Stage 2 with average standards. Satisfactory progress is maintained throughout Years 3 to 6 and standards at the end of Year 6 are average overall. There has been an improvement in pupils' achievement in English but this has not been matched in mathematics and science. Lower and higher attaining pupils do not always make the progress they should because teachers take insufficient account of their assessment information when planning lessons.

Standards at the end of Year 2 have been satisfactory but not better for five years. There is evidence this year to suggest that standards are beginning to improve in Year 2. This year's unconfirmed test results for Year 6 indicate that standards will again be satisfactory overall, similar to the picture in 2005. This is despite the fact that in 2006 there were far fewer pupils with LDD than in 2005. The school's assessment procedures are improving and senior staff have begun to use the information to check the progress of year groups and to set increasingly realistic and challenging targets. The task now is to make more use of this information in the classroom in setting and monitoring individual targets.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The good personal development is illustrated in the positive way in which pupils speak about their school, saying how much they enjoy their lessons and the wide variety of activities available to them. Pupils in Reception quickly grow in confidence. They are keen to talk to adults and to each other about their work. Pupils are taught to understand the consequences of their actions and behave well in response to teachers' high expectations. They feel safe and are confident that their teachers are always ready to help them. Attendance is average but not all pupils arrive at school on time. Pupils have many opportunities to take on responsibility through the school council and through initiatives such 'school buddies' and 'pupil mediators'. Social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is good. Whilst the school's strong Christian ethos influences all its work, pupils develop a good understanding of other faiths and cultures. They understand the importance of exercise and a healthy diet and many pupils take advantage of a wide range of sporting activities.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning in all year groups, including Reception, are satisfactory overall, with the result that pupils make satisfactory progress. Progress in English exceeds that in mathematics and science. This is because teachers make better use of assessment information in their planning for English so the work is matched more effectively to the needs of groups of pupils of differing ability. In addition, in English, teaching assistants provide good support for lower-attaining pupils through a range of well-planned intervention strategies. The new special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) is supporting teachers in identifying the needs of pupils with LDD more accurately and providing appropriate work. As a result of this better teaching, these pupils are making satisfactory and improving progress.

Because relationships are good, pupils generally enjoy their lessons. However, in many lessons there is too much teaching to the whole class, not enough practical activity and not enough attention is given to higher and lower attaining pupils. The quality of marking is variable. Occasionally, pupils are given clear advice about how to improve. Sometimes teachers make comments which are not followed up by the pupil. Because some teachers have low expectations of the pupils, standards of presentation and handwriting are not as good as they should be.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory and statutory requirements are met. Teachers are making good use of new resources in English and pupils reading and writing has improved. In mathematics teachers are beginning to improve pupils' interest in the subject by providing more problem-solving and practical activities but that is at an early stage of development. In information and communication technology (ICT), pupils are rapidly developing their skills in using spreadsheets and producing presentations using PowerPoint. Attractive displays provide evidence of the school's commitment to provide a broad and creative curriculum. Pupils produce good work in art, and music features strongly in school life. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 enjoy learning basic phrases in French and in Years 3 to 6, pupils enjoy their Spanish lessons. There is good participation in a wide range of after-school clubs. The curriculum for the Reception classes is well planned. Good use is made of the new outside area to promote pupils' creative and physical development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Overall, care, guidance and support are satisfactory but the care provided is stronger than the academic guidance. The improving assessment arrangements, particularly in English, are providing teachers with better information about the progress of all pupils.

However the process of sharing this information with individual pupils is not well developed. Not all pupils are clear about their achievements and what they have to do to improve. Despite regular parent-teacher evenings, some parents feel that they are not well informed about their child's progress. Pupils with LDD and vulnerable children are identified early and prompt support which enables them to make satisfactory progress. Parents value highly the care their children receive. Pupils new to the school settle in quickly because of the good arrangements in place to support them. Pupil-teacher relationships are good, with the result that pupils feel safe and know that they have someone to turn to if they have a problem. Child protection arrangements are secure and health and safety issues are generally dealt with effectively. However, despite some improvement, concerns remain about congestion, car parking and pupil cyclists at the beginning and end of the day.

Leadership and management

Grade: 4

Leadership and management are inadequate and senior staff are not fully committed to the same goals. These two key factors contribute significantly to the school's overall lack of effectiveness.

.Good progress in English has been achieved largely through the work of the very determined subject leader. The science leader and the new leader for mathematics have not had the support they require to lead their subjects effectively. They have appreciated the extra funding for resources provided by the headteacher but have had little opportunity to monitor teaching or to influence developments in their subjects. As a result, the progress made in English has not been matched in mathematics and science. The school has a generous view of its performance and has not taken rigorous action to deal with its weaknesses. The significance of pupil mobility and the number of pupils with LDD is sometimes overplayed. The current Year 6 cohort, for example, has an average proportion of pupils with LDD and very little change in pupil numbers this year. The school is unable to produce evidence to demonstrate that the monitoring of teaching overall has resulted in any improvement. Generally, the school's expectation of what their pupils can achieve is not high enough.

The school welcomes newcomers and is developing expertise in dealing with the small number of pupils who arrive at the school with a wide range of significant needs. The large majority of parents view the school positively but some feel that their views are not taken into account and express concerns about the leadership of the school. Governors offer satisfactory support but have not as yet found a solution to weaknesses at senior leadership and management level. They have helped to ensure that important matters are dealt with promptly, for example, in the recent revision of the school's self-evaluation document. The progress already made in English and the early signs of further progress suggested by the new assessment arrangements indicate that there are positive signs that the school has the capacity to move forward.

However, at the moment the school cannot be judged to be providing satisfactory value for money. This will not be achieved until the leaders of the school work more effectively together as a team.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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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?	4	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	3	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	NA

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	4	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	4	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	4	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

We really enjoyed our visit to your school. Thank you for being so friendly and helpful. We really enjoyed visiting your classrooms and talking to you about your work. This letter is to tell you what we thought about your school.

What your school does well:

- You all behave very well. You told us that you enjoy your lessons.
- You like your teachers and say that they help you a lot.
- You have lots of opportunities to take on responsibility.
- The teachers provide many events, visits and after-school activities which you enjoy taking part in.
- Newcomers to the school are welcomed. They settle in quickly.
- You are now making better progress in your reading and writing.

What we have asked your school to do now:

- As individuals, the adults in school work very hard to do their best for you. We would like them to work better as a team so that you can all make as much progress in your work as possible.
- We have asked the teachers to use the assessment information they have about you to give you different things to do depending on whether you find the work difficult or easy.
- The teachers are making changes to help you make better progress. We have asked them to check very carefully to see if these changes are making a difference.

We would like to wish you all the best for the future.