

St Mary's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100350
Local Authority	Hammersmith and Fulham
Inspection number	285777
Inspection dates	26–27 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Michael Lynes HMI

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 on roll	
School	221
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr David Hellens
Headteacher	Mrs Caroline Allen
Date of previous school inspection	8 May 2001
School address	Masbro Road London W14 0LT
Telephone number	020 7603 7717
Fax number	020 7602 7432

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

St Mary's is about average size and has a similar number of pupils as at the time of the last inspection. Indicators of socio-economic disadvantage are higher than those found nationally. About three quarters of pupil are from minority ethnic groups: the largest group are of Black African heritage. About half speak English as an additional language (EAL) and about a tenth of all pupils are at the early stages of learning English. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) is about the national average. The school suffered significant damage from a fire in May 2006.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

St Mary's is a good school that ensures the outstanding personal development of all the children that it cares for so well. As one parent said, 'St Mary's is a home from home'. The school is well led by an exceptionally committed headteacher who enjoys tremendous support from staff, children and parents. One statement from a parent is a fair summary of the large numbers of positive comments received by inspectors, 'The headteacher is extraordinary because she knows the name of every single child and all the siblings whether at school or not. All the pupils seem to adore her'. If the school's aspiration to be outstanding is to be achieved it now needs to put the same energy and focus into further improving both the quality of teaching and the tracking of pupils' progress.

Children start the Nursery with some catching up to do, particularly in communication and language skills. Because of a well planned curriculum and skilful, sensitive teaching the children make good, and sometimes excellent, progress in both Nursery and Reception classes. As a result, almost all achieve their early learning goals before they leave. There have been some staffing difficulties this year which have not impeded the children's progress because they have been managed very well. The lack of a covered outside space for Reception, which was noted at the last inspection, continues to limit opportunities for creativity. Governors now have good plans in place to address this in the coming year.

From these very good foundations, pupils continue to make good academic progress during their time at the school, particularly in English. Progress in mathematics is not as good, and is only satisfactory. The school does have good systems and procedures to monitor the quality of teaching and track the progress of pupils. The judgements of senior leaders on the quality of teaching are accurate, but they do not yet really challenge teachers to improve their practice further. Data is collected on pupils' progress, but is not analysed in sufficient depth to ensure that possible underachievement is spotted consistently and early. Senior leaders understand and accept that addressing these areas will push the school on to become outstanding.

What the school should do to improve further

- Analyse pupils' academic performance more rigorously and consistently.
- Raise standards in mathematics.
- Develop the capacity of governors to both challenge and support school leaders in improving pupils' progress.
- Provide a covered outside space for Reception pupils to enable more opportunities for creativity.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good and standards are above average. Children enter the Nursery with below average levels in speech and language acquisition, listening, independent skills and confidence. The majority make good progress towards achieving their early learning goals during their time in the Foundation stage. At the end of Year 2, pupils reach average standards in national tests, and this is good progress. By the time they leave the school they have attained standards which are well above the national average, which is again good progress.

Pupils' achievement in English is outstanding and in science it is good. In mathematics it is only satisfactory as pupils do not make enough progress in understanding and applying mathematical concepts. Pupils with LDD make good progress as a result of the very good support that they receive. Data provided by the school indicates that this year an increased number of pupils will attain higher than their expected levels at the end of Year 6. If this is confirmed by the results then this will continue the trend of good progress since the last inspection.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The personal development and well-being of pupils are outstanding, because of the high level of care and support they receive. Pupils make excellent progress in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development as they learn to take responsibility for themselves and each other. They really enjoy learning, especially when they are given the opportunity to use their imagination, and they are pleased with their achievements. Behaviour in class and around the school is excellent, and is reflected in the exemplary relationships with staff and with each other. Pupils summed it up by saying that there is a real sense of community in the school and that everyone is friendly.

Attendance is improving and will exceed the target agreed with the local authority. The behaviour and attitudes of pupils show that they know how to keep safe and that they are keen to stay healthy. They readily take on responsibilities within the school and contribute to the wider community, for example by helping to raise funds for charity and by taking part in environmental projects. Pupils are proud of belonging to the School Council and of initiatives that they suggest. The improvements to the class gardens are a good example of this. Older pupils are well prepared and confident about their transfer to secondary school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. A significant proportion of lessons observed were good with some outstanding features. In the Foundation Stage, children get off to a flying start, making good progress due to consistently good, and sometimes outstanding, teaching. Throughout the school, teachers generally plan lessons that match pupils' interests and are adapted to their specific needs. However, even in good lessons, opportunities for pupils to solve problems and think creatively are sometimes limited. In some classes pupils have specific individual targets which both they and their teachers regularly check. This actively involves pupils in their learning, enhances their enjoyment of lessons, and supports good progress. This is not the case in all classes. Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent, as are attitudes to learning. Provision and support for pupils with LDD and EAL is very good and, as a consequence, they make good progress. Parents and carers are well involved in their children's learning, for example helping them with their reading.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good because it meets the full range of the pupils' needs and interests. All statutory requirements are met. The curriculum is enhanced by a very good range of enrichment activities and after school clubs, some of which are oversubscribed. The Foundation Stage

curriculum is carefully planned and allows children good opportunities to initiate their own activities. Pupils develop a good understanding of their local environment through geography lessons, a wide range of trips and involvement in local projects. Excellent use is made of visits, visitors and the rich historical and cultural local community to enhance learning. These are carefully planned to integrate with classroom learning. The Catholic ethos of the school permeates the curriculum, but other faiths are both studied and celebrated. Pupils with LDD have good access to the curriculum because very good use is made of resources, including technology, and targeted support from teaching assistants.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care, guidance and support pupils receive are good, due to the commitment of staff to safeguard their health and welfare. Child protection arrangements are good and reviewed each year. Careful risk assessments and an orderly and clean environment ensure the school is a safe and supportive place in which pupils flourish. The needs of pupils with LDD or EAL are quickly identified when they join the school and good support is provided. This enables them to be fully included in the range of activities on offer and to make good progress. The school works very well with parents and other agencies to ensure the needs of all pupils are met. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and the care and education it provides. One parent said 'Every teacher has been extremely caring.' The school is aware that the monitoring of academic progress requires further improvement as it is currently inconsistent across the school, although there are some examples of good practice.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher leads the school with great passion, commitment and a good awareness of both her own, and the school's, strengths and weaknesses. As a consequence, the school's self-evaluation is largely accurate. The headteacher has ensured that the significant challenges due to the fire last year have not adversely affected the quality of education that the pupils receive. She leads a happy, successful community that ensures the pupils are very well prepared to move on to the next stage of their lives. Senior leaders are also aware that there is more work to be done to ensure that the pupils' academic progress is as effectively promoted as their personal development. There is some very good practice, for example in Years 4 and 5, but this is not yet consistent across the school and potentially leaves the school vulnerable to underachievement. The tracking of pupils' progress and monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning by senior leaders needs to be more rigorous and hold teachers to account with more consistency.

Governors are active, supportive and ensure that the school's finances are well managed. They are beginning to develop the ability to challenge the headteacher on aspects of pupils' achievement following the recent appointment of a new chair of governors. There are good strategic plans in place to develop the school site. However, there is more to do to ensure that they have the capacity to challenge school leaders effectively on pupils' performance.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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

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 behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests 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.

Annex A

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 performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
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	3
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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

6 July 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of St Mary's Catholic Primary School, London, W14 0LT

Thank you for making us feel so welcome when we came to inspect your school. It was really good to see how happy you all were and how much you enjoy school. I really liked watching your assembly on 'Special Places'. We think your school is a special place too, because as one of your parents said, 'St Mary's is a home from home'. St Mary's is a good school with some really excellent things about it.

There are lots of really good things about your school:

- You really get on with each other and your teachers
- You behave very well in the playground and in your classrooms
- Your teachers care about you and look after you really well
- You go on lots of visits, trips and have exciting clubs after school
- There are lots of interesting lessons that you really enjoy
- The school council works hard to help to improve the school
- You learn a lot, especially in English.

There are some things to improve:

- There should be a covered area for the Reception class
- You can learn even more, especially in mathematics
- Your teachers, and the governors, are going to check even more on how much you are learning

I know you will want to thank your headteacher and all the other adults for helping to make St Mary's such a good school. I hope you will keep working hard and enjoying school.

With very best wishes

Michael Lynes
Her Majesty's Inspector