



St Mary of the Angels RC Primary School

Inspection Report

Better
education
and care

Unique Reference Number 101137
Local Authority Westminster
Inspection number 285982
Inspection dates 10–11 January 2007
Reporting inspector David Hornbrook HMI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Shrewsbury Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Bayswater
Age range of pupils	3–11		London W2 5PR
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	02076414482
Number on roll (school)	369	Fax number	02072297665
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Arthur Soares
		Headteacher	Mrs Helen Connolly
Date of previous school inspection	12 February 2001		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
3–11	10–11 January 2007	285982

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Introduction

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

Description of the school

St Mary of the Angels is a popular school enrolling pupils from local Catholic families. It serves an area with an historic tradition of immigration. Over 40 languages are spoken in the school, among which those most common after English are Portuguese, French Creole and Spanish; the proportion of pupils at the early stages of learning English is well above average. About one third of the pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is above average. The school is about to become a designated children's centre.

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 of the Angels School provides a good education and is improving quickly. Notwithstanding disappointing results in 2005, standards and pupils' rates of progress are beginning to show a marked upward trend and are now well above average in many areas. Pupils' achievement is good. The school's success with English is particularly notable in the light of the large number of pupils who enter the school in the early stages of fluency in the language. The school is aware that standards in mathematics, although above average, do not yet match the very good results pupils attain in English. In terms of their progress, it is clear that the effective, targeted use of resources helps pupils get off to a very good start in the Nursery and Reception Years.

Parents speak very positively about the school and believe that it is a secure place for their children to enjoy their learning; one parent commented, 'I find it a very safe environment.' Parents also value the attention given by St Mary's to pupils' individual needs. In this respect, the identification of those with learning difficulties, and the care taken of them, are particularly strong features. Pupils respect the buildings and are very well behaved in classrooms and corridors. They take part in a number of fund-raising initiatives and have links with schools in other parts of the world. In Years 5 and 6, pupils take on an impressive range of responsibilities in the school, becoming play leaders, sports captains and prefects. The school works closely with a number of outside agencies and there are very good links with the local community.

The school is strongly committed to supporting and developing its teaching and non-teaching staff and a new management structure gives teachers the chance to develop their skills in a range of different areas. At the same time, the sharing of data about pupils' progress with class teachers has helped to establish a culture of accountability. These and other measures have contributed to the emergence of a cohesive and committed staff group where ideas are respected and innovation encouraged. The school functions smoothly and with clarity of purpose. Management and monitoring procedures are mostly well embedded and effective, although in the evaluation of its own performance the school does not always fully articulate identified areas of weakness.

The quality of teaching across the school is good, and never less than satisfactory. Lessons are lively and suitably paced, and pupils respond enthusiastically to questions and challenges. However, pupils would benefit if teachers were prepared to relax their control more often and let them explore and develop their ideas independently. The school has a broad and balanced curriculum and an extensive and imaginative range of enrichment activities.

What the school should do to improve further

- Apply to mathematics the improvement strategies successfully employed in English.
- Provide more opportunities in lessons for pupils to develop as independent learners.
- Ensure that self-evaluation fully acknowledges the school's strengths and weaknesses.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Overall, achievement is good and standards are above average. Pupils make good progress in the Foundation Stage so that, by the end of the Reception Year, most exceed the expected standards in all the designated areas of learning. For some years following the last inspection, pupils' attainment in national tests further up the school remained broadly average. However, a recent focus on the development of writing, speaking and listening skills, accompanied by a number of positive interventions, has improved progress and standards in all years. In 2004 and 2006, Year 2 pupils significantly exceeded national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. A similar trend was apparent in tests at the end of Year 6 where standards in English and science are now above the national average. The school is working hard to raise standards in mathematics further with a strategy which emphasises mental mathematics and the application of mathematical skills to problem solving.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Personal development and well-being are outstanding. Pupils thoroughly enjoy learning at St Mary's, one summing it up succinctly, 'School is the best!' Because they find lessons interesting and have great respect for the adults in the school, pupils' behaviour is very good indeed. There is no evidence of bullying or racist behaviour. Attendance is also good. Persuading pupils to eat healthily has been a struggle, but the kitchen staff and teachers have worked hard to ensure that pupils understand healthy choices. Imaginative provision at playtime ensures that pupils have plenty of opportunity to engage in different sports, or to dance to music. These activities are managed by pupil play leaders and are only one example of the ways in which pupils are encouraged to take responsibilities and contribute to the life of the school. Classrooms and corridors are rich with art work and pupils have many opportunities to participate in assemblies and to visit museums and theatres. These many strengths contribute to the good standards achieved by pupils in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good across the school. Teachers plan work that is carefully matched to the needs of pupils of different ages and abilities and manage their classes well. Support teachers and assistants are properly integrated into lessons and provide good quality support for pupils, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities. Teachers provide a good range of different activities for pupils, but the opportunities available in lessons for them to develop as independent learners are more limited. Teachers are careful to involve pupils with learning difficulties in appropriate activities

and ensure that they participate fully. The school is well-equipped with electronic whiteboards and teachers use them effectively to engage and stimulate pupils. Classroom displays are varied and interesting and help to enhance learning by celebrating pupils' work and reminding them of what they should be aiming to achieve. Relationships between teachers and pupils are good. The results of assessment are generally used well to inform strategic and short term planning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is broad and balanced. It satisfies all external requirements as well as meeting the needs of specific groups of pupils such as those with English as an additional language and newly arrived pupils. Imaginative use is made of resources. For example, music and physical education are taught by specialists and the Italian Consulate provides the school with an Italian teacher for Year 3 to 6 classes. The curriculum is enhanced very effectively by lunch time and after-school clubs which broaden pupils' education and increase their enjoyment of school. In addition, there is a programme of events which makes full use of the school's external links, such as those with local specialist schools, business partners and organisations abroad. Recent examples include drama and poetry projects to help develop pupils' speaking and listening skills and a visit from members of Chelsea Football Club.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care, guidance and support of pupils are good. Pupils are very well supported and enjoy being part of the school community. They are confident that they feel very safe and that if they are upset they can approach any adult in the school. Discussion in 'circle time' allows pupils to explore their concerns and to contribute to debates in the school council. The school has effective systems in place to ensure pupils are safe and good use is made of lesson time to teach them about health and safety. The monitoring of and support for pupils' progress are good; pupils know at what level they are working and what they have to do next. Termly group and individual targets are set following assessments and are shared at meetings with parents and pupils. Increasingly, teachers are ensuring that they make regular reference to these targets when teaching and that they review them when necessary.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership and management of the school are good. Having steered St Mary's through some troubled waters the headteacher continues to be a calm and inspirational presence. She is supported by an energetic senior leadership team and a loyal and committed staff. Management systems are good and the school is smooth-running and orderly. Morale among staff is high. Performance data is widely disseminated so that teachers and senior managers know pupils' targets and can monitor their progress.

Staff at all levels are acutely aware of the diversity of the pupil population and work hard to ensure all have an equal chance of success. Lessons are regularly observed and pupils' work scrutinised. The self evaluation report, however, does not articulate many of the issues known to the school and this limits its usefulness. The school makes very good use of outside agencies such as the local authority and has been chosen to be the location of a new children's centre. Governors successfully fulfil their responsibilities, keeping a close eye on all aspects of the school's performance and rotating a monthly responsibility as 'duty governors'. A recent budget deficit was effectively managed so that pupils suffered no ill-effects.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	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	3
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	2
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	2
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.

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	2
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	2
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

As you know, inspectors visited your school recently. I write to thank you for your help when we talked with you, visited your classrooms and looked at your work. You made us feel really welcome and showed us how much you enjoy coming to school.

St Mary's gives you a good education. These are the best things about your school:

- the school is helping you to be courteous and considerate young people
- you are keen to work and learn
- there are lots of opportunities for you to get involved in activities
- you are extremely well looked after and safe in school
- the headteacher and the other teachers and support staff make sure the school runs smoothly and happily and are making lots of improvements
- you benefit from the school's many outside links and partnerships.

Here are the main things the school should do to improve further:

- it should help you do as well in mathematics as you do in English
- in lessons, teachers should give you more chances to learn by yourselves or with your friends
- it should look a bit more carefully at what it does well and what it might do better.

I wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours faithfully

David Hornbrook

Her Majesty's Inspector