

# St Mary's RC Primary School, Isleworth

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	102528
<b>Local Authority</b>	Hounslow
<b>Inspection number</b>	286412
<b>Inspection date</b>	28 March 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Nicola Davies

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>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	235
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Liz Killip
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr John Murphy
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	15 April 2002
<b>School address</b>	South Street Isleworth TW7 7EE
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8560 7166
<b>Fax number</b>	020 8232 8820

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

This one form entry Catholic primary school draws its pupils from three local parishes. Most pupils are of White British heritage but a third come from a wide range of other ethnic and linguistic backgrounds. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average, as is the percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities.

The school was without a permanent headteacher for nearly one year. The new headteacher took up his post three weeks before the inspection.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This popular school provides a good education for its pupils which is highly valued by parents. Parents' positive views illustrate that the school succeeds well in achieving its mission to provide a 'safe, caring and happy place where we all have a fair chance to learn and grow together and do the best we can'. This applies not only to pupils but also to staff, who, as parents note, 'work very well together for the benefit of the school as a whole'. The strength of this team approach has meant that the school has continued to overcome obstacles and improve during the time it was without a permanent head teacher. It was well led and managed in this period by the able deputy headteacher and senior teachers, supported by the committed and enthusiastic school community. This contributes to its good capacity to continue to improve. The whole school is now looking forward to working with their new head teacher. A weaker area that the school already has plans to address is making the most of the good information it collects from parents, pupils, teachers and progress data to fully develop its plans for the future.

Well informed teaching and a good, varied curriculum with popular extra activities means that pupils work hard, achieve well, attend regularly and above all, enjoy school and value the relationships they make there. Good care, guidance and support further contribute to pupils' well developed academic, social and personal skills.

Children enter the Nursery class with skills which are a little above those expected for their age. Improvements to the activities and environment, particularly in the Reception class, mean that children make good progress during their time in the Foundation Stage. By the end of Year 6, pupils reach standards which are well above average and sometimes exceptionally high. This represents good progress and achievement overall is good. The school has however correctly identified that not all more able pupils attain at higher levels, particularly in the earlier years of school. The school's current focus is therefore on ensuring that these pupils are consistently well challenged. A number of successful changes have already been made to address this although, on occasions, opportunities are missed to stretch the most able pupils in lessons.

From their earliest days, the school places a strong emphasis on children's spiritual, moral and physical development alongside their academic development. This permeates the school's activities and contributes very well to pupils' good personal and social development. Pupils relish the opportunities they have for reflection and show an excellent awareness of the need to adopt healthy lifestyles. As a result, pupils really do 'learn and grow together' and leave the school well prepared for the next steps in their education and their future lives.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure more able pupils are consistently challenged in lessons
- Improve the use of management information in strategic planning

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Achievement is good throughout the school and standards are above average. Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 have been consistently above average for the past three years and are sometimes exceptionally high. For example, in the most recent tests, over half

of the pupils achieved higher levels in English. There are no significant differences in the attainment or progress made by different groups of pupils.

Detailed analysis of pupils' attainment has indicated that a few more able pupils could attain more highly by the end of Year 2 and in mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. The school has addressed this well through a whole school focus on challenging more able pupils and providing extra opportunities for all pupils to undertake independent investigations and problem solving. Inspection evidence confirms that current pupils are benefiting from these approaches and are making good progress towards challenging targets.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Behaviour is good and pupils have very positive attitudes to learning. Pupils speak openly of their pride in the school and are particularly pleased with the influence they have within the school community. The active school council provides an effective forum for pupils to influence future developments. Pupils are similarly effective as 'buddies' and junior safety officers, roles which support their good understanding of safety and hazards. Pupils contribute well to the local church and community and the school is planning to extend this further through links with schools and communities further afield. Pupils participate enthusiastically in sports and other physical activities, enhanced by the school's good range of partnerships with local schools and sports organisations. They develop an excellent understanding of what it means to have a healthy lifestyle. For example, in the nursery classes, three year old pupils are able to discuss the health benefits of satsumas and carrots compared to chocolate and sweets. Similarly, older pupils wrote to the education minister to request that a free fruit scheme for younger children be extended to all age groups. Although the request was unsuccessful, it underlines pupils' determination to make a difference and their commitment to healthy eating and healthy lifestyles.

Pupils' moral, social and cultural development is good, underpinned throughout their time at the school by their very good spiritual development. They readily understand moral issues of fairness, prejudice and intolerance. As a result, they show good consideration for the needs of others and work and play in harmony with each other and with the adults in the school.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching is good overall. Pupils are enthusiastic learners who particularly enjoy the increasing opportunities they have to undertake their own research, experiments or solve problems. As one parent noted, teachers are becoming more focussed on teaching pupils 'how to learn'. As part of this, teachers give pupils good opportunities to discuss their work and progress. Marking is regular and helpful. Teachers use a range of approaches to interest pupils including using their new interactive whiteboards to demonstrate ideas. Teachers have good subject knowledge and plan well for the different needs of pupils in their classes, although activities planned for pupils in some lessons could be more challenging, particularly for more able pupils. Good teamwork with well-informed additional adults helps meet the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities well.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The good curriculum is well planned to ensure a good balance of subjects. It is strengthened by a wide range of well supported clubs and other activities which support pupils' learning and especially their very good physical development. A particularly successful feature of the curriculum is the opportunities provided for older pupils to develop their thinking and presentation skills by undertaking an in-depth activity related to one of the subjects they are studying, for instance a Tudor 'quest'. This helps pupils develop their oracy and literacy skills alongside their skills in other subjects, contributing to the high standards they reach in English. Pupils also use their good information and communication technology (ICT) skills across the curriculum, which is a significant improvement since the last inspection. The school is keen to extend the good outdoor curriculum which children in the reception class experience to children in the nursery class.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Care, guidance and support are good and focus on the needs of individual children. The provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is good. Their needs are spotted early and well provided for. As a result they make good progress. Although pupils at the early stages of learning English as an additional language are relatively few in number, teachers work closely with a local authority specialist to support their progress. Academic guidance is improving as senior staff recognise the need to improve this area of the school's work. Teachers are now becoming more consistent in using assessment information to set and help pupils meet challenging targets. As a result, almost all pupils now make good progress.

Procedures to protect children are regularly reviewed and careful assessments are made of activities to minimise any risks to the health and safety of adults and pupils.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good. Senior staff led the school well during the recent period of uncertainty. Governors support the school well and are developing expertise in holding the school, under its new leadership, to account. Teachers with expertise in particular subjects are effective in monitoring and evaluating their areas of responsibility and contribute well to the school's accurate self evaluation and plans for improvement. For example, provision for children in the reception class has been significantly improved so that children do well within the stimulating and well planned environment. Similarly, effective monitoring and evaluation revealed that some more able pupils could make better progress, which the school has begun to address successfully. The school gathers the views of parents and pupils well and, as a result, knows itself well. A weaker area which the school plans to address is to ensure that such useful information is drawn together to inform and prioritise its future plans.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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

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**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for making me so welcome at your school. Your new headteacher told me that I would really enjoy meeting you and he was right. It was a pleasure to spend the day with you and share in some of your lessons and activities. I particularly enjoyed your singing in assembly so I'm not surprised you have recorded some songs for your new school website. I'm sure they will be a very popular download.

You and your parents told me that you go to a good school and I agree. I could see that you enjoy your interesting lessons and all the other things you do at school. Your teachers work very well as a team to take good care of you and share their ideas well with each other. You already know this as they listen very carefully to your ideas and to those of your parents. These are just some of the reasons why you work hard, do well and enjoy your time at St Mary's.

One of the reasons that your teachers were looking forward to my visit was that they always want to make the school even better. Like your teachers, I think it is a good idea for them to keep checking that your work is always hard enough for you so that you can make the very best progress possible. I have also asked them to think about how they use all the information they have about the school and your progress to make plans for the future.

Thank you again for your help and with very best wishes for your future.

Nicola Davies  
Lead inspector