



# St Mary's Catholic Primary School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 103993  
**Local Authority** Sandwell  
**Inspection number** 286830  
**Inspection dates** 17–18 January 2007  
**Reporting inspector** Frances Gillam

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 address</b>	Manor House Road
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided		Wednesbury
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11		WS10 9PN
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	0121 5053595
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	233	<b>Fax number</b>	0121 5026333
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Paul Piddock
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Jane Dalloway
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	14 October 2002		

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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

This is an average-sized primary school. Most pupils come from a White British background and just over 17% of pupils come from minority ethnic groups. A small number of these are at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils identified with learning difficulties is similar to most schools. The proportion of pupils entitled to a free school meal is broadly average. Staff absence rates, due to illness, have been high in Years 1 and 2 over the past three years.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

St Mary's is a satisfactory school. Children in the Foundation Stage make a good start to their education. In the Nursery and Reception class, lively and stimulating activities encourage children to learn. This good provision ensures that children grow in confidence and make good progress. Standards when children enter Nursery are below average, they achieve well and most children attain the goals expected for their age by the time they start in Year 1. Throughout the rest of the school, predominantly satisfactory teaching ensures that pupils, including those from minority ethnic groups, achieve as well as expected and this leads to average standards by Year 6. Whilst pupils' progress overall is satisfactory by Year 6, pupils' achievement in writing and mathematics in Years 1 and 2 is sometimes uneven. This is because assessment information is not always used well enough, particularly in the youngest class, to build on pupils' successes in the Reception Year and to provide activities that meet the differing needs of pupils.

A stronger feature of the satisfactory curriculum is the improvement to the English curriculum which has successfully raised the focus of writing in Years 3 to 6, capturing the interest of boys and leading to a good rate of progress in these year groups. Senior managers know higher attaining girls do not do as well as they could in mathematics and science and have not yet implemented strategies to fully motivate and engage these pupils in their learning to ensure they do their very best.

The satisfactory care, guidance and support enables pupils to make satisfactory progress in their personal development. Most pupils like school, they know how to care for themselves and make good choices about what they eat to ensure they grow up fit and healthy. Pupils make good use of targets to help them improve their work. This is especially successful in Years 3 to 6 and contributes well to the good progress pupils make now in English. Pupils say they feel safe and most show care and consideration for others. Pupils are very aware of how misbehaviour should be dealt with and feel that at times they are not treated fairly. Pupils are right. Some staff are not consistent or always effective in dealing with incidences of challenging behaviour. This does not help to promote good behaviour and pupils' enjoyment of school.

Satisfactory leadership and management have enabled senior managers and governors to have a secure understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. As a result, they have identified the right action to bring about change for the better and have the capacity to move the school forward. Standards by Year 6 have been maintained and provision in the Foundation Stage has improved. Senior managers recognise the school is yet to be fully successful in providing a consistent approach to how pupils' behaviour is managed and in providing a curriculum that captures the interest of all learners. There have been satisfactory improvements since the last inspection.

## What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure teachers make better use of assessment information to challenge pupils to do their best in writing and mathematics, particularly as pupils move from the Foundation Stage into their next stage of learning.
- Develop better ways to motivate and engage higher attaining girls in order to improve their achievement in mathematics and science.
- Ensure that staff use behaviour management strategies consistently.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory overall and good for children in the Foundation Stage. Staff in the Nursery and Reception class encourage children to build positive relationships and most children quickly learn to work and play together constructively. The majority of children reach the expected goals for their age by the end of the Reception Year and they make good progress based on their level of attainment on entry to the Nursery.

Standards are average by the end of Year 6 and pupils, including those from minority ethnic backgrounds and those at the early stages of learning English, make satisfactory progress. Improvement in English has been quicker than in mathematics and science, particularly in writing in Years 3 to 6. Boys find writing tasks stimulating and say they have more opportunities now to read and write about things of interest to them. This accounts for their growing enjoyment of school. Girls share the boys' enthusiasm for English but say they are not so fond of mathematics and science. This particularly affects the performance of higher attaining girls who could be doing better. While most pupils' achievement is satisfactory, pupils' achievement in Years 1 and 2 is uneven. Pupils in the youngest class could be doing better in writing and mathematics and means they have a lot of catching up to do in Year 2. Throughout the school, pupils with learning difficulties make satisfactory progress. Strategies to support these pupils are successful, with activities suitably matched to their abilities.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 3

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils are confident and have the self-assurance to stand up for their beliefs. Most eat healthily and take regular exercise. Pupils make a satisfactory contribution to their community and the school council plays an active role in the life of the school. Pupils' behaviour is satisfactory and most act sensibly, with due care for their own safety and that of others. Pupils' attendance is also satisfactory and, although many pupils say that school is enjoyable, they feel things could be better. This is because they are worried about the behaviour of some older pupils. They feel that the school takes bullying seriously and that they can trust their teachers, but that the actions taken by the staff can sometimes be ineffectual.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

Most teachers respond well to initiatives to improve pupils' learning. This has had a significant impact on the pupils' learning in English and for children's experiences in the Foundation Stage, which are now better than at the time of the last inspection. Many pupils say that literacy lessons are fun and they enjoy the increasing opportunities to work and talk together. In most classes, teachers plan carefully for the different needs of their pupils but sometimes they do not use assessment information as well as they could to challenge the higher attaining pupils or support those who need extra help. This leads to activities that do not always build effectively on their previous learning and is particularly the case when pupils move from the Reception class into Year 1. Aspects of good teaching in the Foundation Stage and Years 5 and 6, such as the effective management of pupils' behaviour, means that in these year groups, classrooms are calm and pupils concentrate well. This is not always the case in other year groups, especially where learning support assistants are not used effectively to support those pupils with challenging behaviour.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

The curriculum provides a broad range of experiences for pupils. Activities for the most part build satisfactorily on pupils' previous learning and prepare them adequately for the future. The recently reviewed curriculum has been particularly successful in increasing boys' interest in writing, and a carefully planned curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage ensures they make good progress. Senior managers recognise that in mathematics and science girls do not have the same high level of interest and enjoyment as they have in literacy. The school has made a start by reviewing what it offers in mathematics and science but is yet to adapt the curriculum so that it appeals to and challenges the higher attaining girls to do their very best.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 3

Staff promote healthy lifestyles successfully and routinely remind pupils about the need to take care of themselves and others. This contributes successfully to pupils' personal development and well-being. Child protection procedures are well established. Staff are quick to respond to pupils' concerns but some are inconsistent in how they deal with behavioural problems. This leads to confusion amongst pupils about what is expected of them and leaves those who behave well feeling they are not always treated fairly. Pupils understand and make good use of the targets they have to help them improve their work. Targets are particularly challenging in English and contribute well to the progress pupils make.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Senior managers and governors have a clear understanding of the school's effectiveness because of the satisfactory processes in place. They evaluate the quality of lessons regularly and accurately track pupils' progress. This ensures that relevant priorities for development are identified and these focus securely on improving pupil achievement. School improvement strategies are proving successful and shows in some of the actions since the last inspection. However, inconsistencies in the way some staff manage pupils' behaviour remain. The school has been aware for some time that higher attaining girls do not do as well as they could in science and mathematics but are yet to take action to deal with this effectively.

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## 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>	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
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	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

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

### The quality of provision

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

<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.

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
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	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
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**

Thank you for making the team of inspectors so welcome when we visited your school recently. We really enjoyed meeting you and seeing all the things you were doing.

Your school, the people in charge and your teachers do a satisfactory job and this is helping you to make satisfactory progress and reach average standards by the time you leave school.

Here are some of the most important things we found good about your school.

- The children in the Nursery and Reception class do well. They have lots of exciting things to learn and they make a good start to school.
- You do well in English, especially in Years 3 to 6. You enjoy your literacy lessons and boys are doing much better in writing.
- You keep healthy and fit because you exercise and like to eat plenty of fruit and vegetables.
- You make good use of your English targets and this is helping you to do even better in your work.

To improve the school still further, we have asked your teachers to work together on three things.

- To always make sure that the work you have builds well on what you have done before, especially after the good start many of you make in the Nursery and Reception Year.
- To help the higher attaining girls to do better in mathematics and science.
- To make sure that adults treat you fairly, especially when some children do not behave as well as they should.

You can all help by behaving your very best and working extra hard in lessons.

With best wishes for the future