

St Mary and All Saints CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110459
Local Authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	310315
Inspection date	22 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Vanessa Ward

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	205
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr Daphne Scott
Headteacher	Mrs Elaine Kilner
Date of previous school inspection	7 June 2004
School address	Maxwell Road Beaconsfield HP9 1RG
Telephone number	01494 673762
Fax number	01494 674757

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school, and investigated:

- how successfully the school is making its curriculum more creative
- the effectiveness of all levels of leadership and management in improving learning
- how well pupils respond to the provision for their personal development.

The inspector gathered evidence from the school's records, planning and policies, and by observing teaching and learning. She also held discussions with staff, governors and pupils and scrutinised parents' questionnaires. The inspector did not investigate other aspects of the school's work in detail, but found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified. These assessments have been included in the report.

Description of the school

The school is slightly smaller than average. Pupils enter the school in the September after their fourth birthday. Most of the pupils are of White British heritage. A minority come from a range of ethnic backgrounds and a few speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. This includes pupils who have difficulty with reading, writing or with their social and emotional development. The percentage of pupils who qualify for free school meals is below average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

St Mary and All Saints is an outstanding school. It is highly effective in promoting both the pupils' personal development and their academic achievement. This is due to the very successful leadership of the headteacher, whose guidance generates high expectations and a continual striving for improvement. All of this has led to substantial improvement since the previous inspection and indicates that the school has excellent capacity to continue building on its success.

There is a strong sense of teamwork among all who work in the school, and a shared determination to provide the very best for the pupils. All are very effectively involved in the school's self-evaluation, action planning and the monitoring of progress. Whilst much of the teaching is outstanding, there is no complacency. The system for observing teaching and learning is successfully geared to making all teaching as good as the best. Where areas for development are identified, such as in improving standards in writing by the end of Year 2, all staff are involved in contributing to the initiative's success. Teachers plan very successfully to meet the needs of the variety of learners in their classes. Those teachers with subject responsibilities have significant input to school improvement, and carry out their leadership roles very successfully. The governing body is closely involved in the school's development. Governors give willingly of their time and work very conscientiously for the benefit of the school. They have an excellent understanding of the school's strengths, and of those areas where it can improve. They are very active in contributing to school initiatives, such as promoting healthy lifestyles and ensuring pupils' safety both in school and on their journeys to and from school.

The constant striving in recent years to raise standards has proved successful, and, by the end of Year 6, standards are consistently high and achievement is outstanding. From average attainment on entry, pupils make excellent progress. The proportion of pupils who attain higher levels in the national tests is impressive, and is a consequence of the school's excellent provision for more able pupils. The school's system for tracking pupils' progress is used very effectively to identify those who need extra support. This support is tailored to pupils' individual needs and enables all groups of pupils to make excellent progress. This includes those who have difficulties with reading, writing or with their social and emotional development, as well as the few pupils who are learning English as an additional language.

The school is continually finding ways to make its curriculum more exciting and creative for the pupils. Developments in the teaching of drama, music and art, and increased links with local schools to provide specialist input, contribute significantly to the outstanding curriculum and to the excellent progress made by the more able pupils. Leaders ensure that all subjects are included in school initiatives. Consequently, teachers plan very effective links between subjects. The creative use of ICT, such as in fixing a CCTV camera to a nesting box on the outside of the school, is enabling the pupils to observe at first-hand the hatching and development of baby blue tits. Such interesting and exciting experiences produce very positive attitudes to learning in the pupils. They thoroughly enjoy school and say they find it hard to choose a favourite subject because, 'All our lessons are interesting'. The curriculum offers pupils a very broad range of activities and is greatly enriched by educational visits and visitors to school. Pupils speak enthusiastically about being able to participate in drama and musical productions. The school's many clubs are very well attended and contribute to the pupils' participation in sport and exercise. The pupils' understanding of healthy lifestyles and of how

to keep safe is developed very well through the curriculum, including cross-curricular topics, such as studying micro-organisms in Year 6. These activities make a significant contribution to their personal development and well-being.

Outstanding care, guidance and support produce excellent personal development in the pupils. All aspects of pupils' health and safety are given high priority. Pupils say that initiatives, such as anti-bullying and road safety, help them to feel completely safe in school. They are very confident that they can turn to an adult for help if they have a problem. The recent introduction of healthy hot meals is proving very popular, and pupils have an excellent understanding of what constitutes a balanced diet. Whilst pupils have a very good knowledge of the targets they are trying to achieve, they are less certain as to how close they are to achieving them. The school is developing its procedures in order to increase pupils' involvement in this process, and acknowledges that this is an area for improvement. Pupils are polite, caring and behave very well. They carry out their responsibilities in school very conscientiously, often caring for younger pupils or initiating change through the school council. They are proud of their input to the purchase of playground equipment. Organising fund-raising, taking part in church services, and in performances both in school and in the wider community, greatly help to develop their self-esteem and confidence. Such activities, combined with their excellent basic skills prepare the pupils very well for the future.

Parents greatly appreciate all that the school does, many commenting on the 'welcoming and friendly atmosphere', 'the care that is provided' and the 'well-rounded education' that their children receive. One parent reflected the views of many in commenting, 'I feel very lucky to have my child at St Mary's.'

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children are given an excellent start to their education. The close liaison with parents, prior to their child's admission, helps them to settle quickly and adjust to school routines. On entry to Reception, the children's skills are typical of those generally found in four-year-olds. Outstanding teaching and assessment enable the children to make excellent progress. Most reach the expected goals by the end of the Foundation Stage, often exceeding them in several areas of learning. The curriculum provides an excellent range of activities that both stimulate the children's interest and curiosity, and promote outstanding progress. Themes are linked very successfully to areas of learning, and this helps to make the learning meaningful to the children. During the inspection, role-play relating to travel, the modelling of a village in Africa and the preparation of a fruit salad all linked meaningfully into a story which had been shared with the children. Very good use is made of the outdoor area. The teaching of letter sounds and names is given suitably high priority, as is the continuity of learning when the children move to Year 1.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase pupils' involvement in assessing how well they are doing.

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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	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?	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

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

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

09 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Mary and All Saints CofE Primary School, Beaconsfield, HP9 1RG

Thank you for making me feel welcome when I visited your school recently. It was a pleasure to talk to you and interesting to hear your views about your school. You are rightly proud of your school, because it is outstanding. This is also the view of your parents and carers.

Here are the things I liked most about your school.

- You make excellent progress and, by Year 6, your standards in English, mathematics and science are much higher than those attained in most schools.
- Your teachers work very hard to provide you with lots of interesting things to do and learn so that you really enjoy school.
- All of the grown-ups take very good care of you and this helps you to feel safe and happy.
- You eat healthily in school, take lots of exercise and behave extremely well, and all of these things will be important to you as you grow up.
- Your headteacher, teachers and governors are very successful at finding ways to improve your school.

In order to help your school to continue getting better, I have asked your teachers to involve you more in understanding how well you are doing. You can help by working hard and always doing your best.

I hope that you continue to enjoy school.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Vanessa Ward

Lead Inspector