

St Mary's C of E Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101046
Local Authority	Wandsworth
Inspection number	285955
Inspection dates	24 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Keith Williams

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	252
Appropriate authority	Governing body
Chair	Ms S Wilton
Headteacher	Reverend TJ Marwood
Date of previous school inspection	26-29 March 2001
School address	Felsham Road Putney London SW15 1BA
Telephone number	020 8788 9591
Fax number	020 9789 9591

Age group	3-11
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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 the following issues: achievement and standards, teaching and learning, personal development and well-being, care, guidance and support, leadership and management, gathering evidence from lesson observations, the scrutiny of pupils' work, assessment data and documents. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

The school serves a socially and economically advantaged area and fewer pupils than usual are eligible for free school meals. The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage and the remainder are from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion learning English as an additional language is lower than that found nationally. An average proportion of pupils is identified with learning difficulties or disabilities, although more than usual are in receipt of a statement of special educational need.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school. There are many reasons why the school is successful, the most significant of which are the exceptional leadership, teaching and care provided for pupils. As a result, pupils have extremely positive attitudes to school. They achieve outstandingly well to reach exceptionally high standards and they make excellent progress in their personal development. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. Amongst many very positive comments, one reported, '...there is a genuine desire to ensure that each child fulfils his or her potential irrespective of academic ability.'

Pupils join the school with a very broad range of skills. Whilst, overall, their attainment on admission is good, there are in each year varying numbers of pupils with significant special educational needs and those who are identified as gifted and talented. The school builds very well on pupils' starting points and children get off to a flying start in the Nursery and Reception because of the outstanding provision. Staff have a very clear understanding of how young children learn. They provide a good balance of activities led by an adult and those initiated by children and they keep a very close check on how they are doing. Children thrive in the supportive atmosphere, and make excellent progress, so that almost all reach the goals expected of children at the end of Reception and a good many exceed them.

Across the school, there is a very strong emphasis on identifying precisely what pupils are expected to learn in lessons and how they will know if they have done so. These objectives and success criteria are given a high priority. They are shared at the start of lessons, referred to regularly and are reflected on and evaluated at the end. This works very well because pupils tackle their work with a clear picture of what they are working towards. High quality marking and target setting extends pupils' understanding of how well they are doing and how they might improve. Another excellent feature is the way that teachers take account of pupils' varying capabilities and provide work that gives the right amount of challenge or support. High quality support staff dovetail with teachers extremely well. This means that pupils with learning difficulties, and the increasing number with significant special educational needs, are able to play a full part in lessons and achieve as well as their classmates. Those needing a boost to their confidence benefit from sensitive teaching in small groups. The school focuses equally strongly on the needs of the most able, often providing adult support to extend the challenge for these high achievers. Pupils of all abilities benefit from a broad and exciting curriculum, greatly enhanced by an excellent range of enrichment activities.

This consistently strong teaching means that pupils make excellent progress across the school. By the end of Year 2, standards are well above average and they are exceptionally high by the end of Year 6. These high standards are reflected in the school's successful performance in the national tests. In Year 2, the results have been significantly above average in recent years, particularly in reading and writing. Performance is even better at Year 6 so that, in 2006, results were significantly above average in English, mathematics and science. These results represent a very good rate of progress as pupils build successfully on their good standards at the end of Year 2. Results in English are particularly strong in Year 6, with pupils making

excellent progress in reaching exceptionally high standards in the past two years. The work of pupils currently in Year 6 and the school's accurate assessments of their performance show that they are well on track to maintain exceptionally high standards.

The outstanding headteacher's drive and determination to achieve excellence is shared by staff and governors. He, the deputy, business and inclusion managers form a highly effective senior team. They are very well supported by governors and, together, they monitor all aspects of the school's work very closely and ensure there is no room for complacency. Excellent systems to track pupils' progress are used very well to ensure that those of all abilities do as well as they should and to provide extra help where it is most needed. A very close check is kept on teaching and learning. Subject leaders share the responsibility for much of this work and they play a significant role in the drive for improvement. Many are new to leadership roles. The school has rightly identified the need to ensure that high quality middle management is maintained, by providing new leaders with the skills they need to monitor standards, teaching and learning in their subjects. Senior staff use the outcomes of lesson observations, comprehensive assessments of pupils' work and a thorough evaluation of test results to identify what needs to improve. A clear example of their success is the improvement in the match of work to pupils' capabilities, which is now a significant strength. Improvements such as this contribute very strongly to pupils' high levels of achievement and have ensured that standards are higher than at the time of the last inspection.

The school's pursuit of academic excellence is not at the expense of pupils' personal development. The school takes exceptional care of its pupils and a strong Christian ethos underpins all of its work. The school goes far beyond the requirements for checking on the suitability of adults to work with children. The support provided for pupils with widely differing needs ensures that pupils achieve excellently, regardless of background, ability or gender. The school rises successfully to the challenge of meeting the needs of pupils with significant learning difficulties and disabilities. New pupils are welcomed warmly into school and many parents report how well their children settled in when they first joined. Those new to learning English are well supported so that they soon gain confidence and play a full part in lessons. A very close check is kept on the welfare of those potentially at risk or who might be vulnerable and strong links with outside agencies support this work.

As a result of this high quality care, pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. Pupils enjoy school immensely, feel safe in its supportive environment and are exceptionally well prepared to be citizens of the future. They appreciate the help they get, in-and-out of lessons, particularly the kindness of staff and the availability of 'problem pals' during break times. The school places a very strong emphasis on promoting healthy lifestyles. This is borne out by pupils' clear understanding of what constitutes a healthy diet and by the large numbers who take part in the excellent range of sporting activities on offer. Lunchtimes are enhanced greatly by a wonderful range of games led by volunteer sports leaders from Year 6. Many pupils take up the opportunity to cycle to school. Pupils feel listened to by the school and they appreciate the work of their influential school council. Pupils' enjoyment of school is best summed up by two pupils, one of whom reported that the best thing about the

school is 'learning,' while another said, 'I wouldn't change anything – it's brilliant!' Given the school leaders' success in raising standards and maintaining the school's significant strengths, they have excellent capacity to improve the school even further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that those new to leadership have opportunities to develop the skills necessary to monitor the work in their subjects.

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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	16–19
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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	
The quality and standards in 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	

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	
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	1	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of 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	

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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	

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 B**Letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection.**

25 May 2005

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Mary's C of E Primary School, Putney SW15 1BA

Thank you for the very friendly way you welcomed me to your school when I visited recently. I am writing to tell you of my findings. Many of you took time to speak to me and your views were very helpful. I was especially delighted to meet with some of you to look at your work and hear your opinions.

Many of you told me how much you enjoy school and that you think you are getting on well. I agree with you, your teachers and your parents. Your school is outstanding. I enjoyed visiting your classrooms and I was very pleased to see how hard you work with your teachers and the other adults. Your work is of a very high standard. There are many reasons why this is so. You take your work very seriously, are very keen to learn and work extremely hard. Your excellent headteacher and teachers do everything they can to help you learn well. I was delighted to see how often you talk to your teachers about how well you are learning and how well you know your targets.

Your teachers keep a close eye on how you are doing so that those of you who need extra help or harder work get it. They take excellent care of you and many of you told me how kind the adults are and how safe you feel in school. You are very kind to each other, too, which makes your playtimes very enjoyable. Well done to the 'problem pals.' You make a real difference. I was very pleased to see how many of you take part in sports. Well done, too, for those of you in Year 6 who help to organise the excellent lunchtime activities.

Even though your school is excellent, your headteacher, staff and governors want to make it even better. Your teachers do a really good job of organising subjects. Some of them are new to doing jobs like this and your headteacher wants to give them the chance to learn how to check on what is happening in lessons. This is important so that your school carries on being excellent and I know that you will do everything you can to help them.

Once again, thank you very much for your help and good luck for the future.

Keith Williams
Lead inspector