

St Mary's Bryanston Square CofE School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101136
Local Authority	Westminster
Inspection number	323410
Inspection dates	25 February 2009
Reporting inspector	Selwyn 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	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	236
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Len Clark
Headteacher	Mr Peter Hadfield
Date of previous school inspection	28 September 2005
School address	Enford Street London W1H 1DL
Telephone number	020 7641 4130
Fax number	020 7641 5438

Age group	3-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and particularly investigated:

- the provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- whether there are any differences in provision and rates of progress between key stages
- the impact of measures taken by school leaders to secure improvements.

The inspectors met with pupils, some staff and governors. Parts of lessons were observed, parents' questionnaires and a sample of pupils' work were examined and school information, including the school's self-evaluation, was scrutinised. The inspectors 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 the report.

Description of the school

This is an average-sized school. More than three quarters of the pupils are from backgrounds other than White British. More than half of the pupils are at an early stage of learning English, including several who joined the school partway through their primary education. An above-average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school extends provision beyond the school day through its breakfast and after school clubs. Since the last inspection, history was inspected as part of an Ofsted survey of that subject.

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's is a good school. In its prospectus, the school says of itself that it 'serves the local community and welcomes the children who come here, whatever their background and faith'. Parents readily confirm that to be so. Parents of the many children who join the school with little or no English are especially pleased at the rapid progress that their children make. As one delighted parent explained, 'As a newcomer to the country, my daughter learned English in no time' thanks to 'the high level of teaching and support which she experienced'.

In this well-run school leaders have a very clear and accurate picture of how pupils are doing. This, and the good progress since the last inspection, shows the school's good capacity for continued improvement. Each pupil's progress is carefully tracked, with support put in place for any identified as at risk of falling behind, for example through reading support in the infant classes. The headteacher and leadership team are equally rigorous in their monitoring of lessons. The detailed feedback that they give to teachers has helped to ensure good teaching and learning across the school. Lessons are generally well paced, with activities that often keep the pupils on their toes - sometimes quite literally as the pupils combine singing and physical exercises in some classes as they move between tasks. Questioning is used well to extend pupils' thinking, expand their explanations and check their understanding. Pupils are also involved in assessing their own and each other's work, supplementing the mostly good, helpful marking that highlights for pupils what they need to do to improve their work. In a few lessons, however, the learning objectives and the success criteria set out by teachers are not sharp enough to make sure the pupils are challenged to make rapid progress. Nonetheless, the good teaching in most lessons results in pupils achieving well. Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They make similarly good progress in both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, to reach average standards in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6.

One of the reasons pupils achieve well is that they are such enthusiastic learners. Their personal development is outstanding, and this is greatly valued by parents. As one explained, 'We appreciate the way the school balances academic achievement with personal development.' Children from very diverse backgrounds mix and get on very well together, genuinely valuing and showing interest and respect for each other's different cultures and beliefs. Behaviour is exemplary and that contributes to the air of harmony throughout the school. Because there are excellent arrangements to ensure pupils' care, guidance and support, pupils feel safe in school. They also learn how to keep safe, for example when using the internet. Pupils have an excellent understanding of the need for regular exercise and a healthy diet, and this is reflected in the Healthy School award the school has gained. Pupils have good opportunities to be involved in the school and wider community, for example through fund-raising for local charities. Pupils' attendance rates are above average and the good progress that the pupils make in their key literacy and numeracy skills prepares them well for the next stage of their education and for future life.

Activemark and Sportsmark awards attest to the good provision for sports, despite the limitations of the school site. The good curriculum helps to stimulate pupils' interest and excitement, including through themed weeks and the opportunity that Key Stage 2 pupils have to learn Spanish. The curriculum is further enhanced through the many visits organised to places of interest and the visitors welcomed to the school. It is also enriched through a very good range of well-attended clubs and after school activities.

Governors provide school leaders with both support and challenge. They are especially strong in their commitment to and promotion of community cohesion. In addition to the celebration of different cultures and beliefs within the school, St Mary's also reaches out into the local community, through involvement in charitable and community events and through the use of the school buildings by local community groups. In this school, which prides itself on the way it is welcoming and inclusive to all, major works are currently underway to install an elevator so that pupils in wheelchairs and with other disabilities have full access to all parts of the building.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

When the children enter the Nursery their skills are not nearly as well developed as those expected for their age. They make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage, but at the end of the Reception Year their level of development remains below average. It is lowest in communication, language and literacy but, even in this area of learning, the children's progress is good because so many join the school with little or no English. In this well-led and well-managed provision, children enthusiastically undertake the wide range of interesting activities provided for them. They respond especially well to the emphasis placed by staff on learning through fun, games and practical problem-solving. For example, Nursery children greatly enjoyed learning about subtraction through their teddy bears getting off an imaginary bus. Children also enjoy the regular warm-up exercises which make use of action songs that make learning fun. Staff do not always make it clear in their planning what it is that the children are expected to learn from some activities. This, in turn, makes it difficult for staff to accurately assess the progress that the children make. Children are exceptionally well supervised and cared for and their personal development is good. They play well together and demonstrate increasing independence and collaborative skills. All children, including the many learning English as an additional language and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, are included fully in all activities.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the learning objectives in all lessons are clearly focused, with appropriately challenging success criteria.

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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?	2
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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are the children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or 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	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	2
The behaviour of learners	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

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.

All white boxes must be completed. The grey boxes are used wherever the inspection team has sufficient evidence to come to a secure judgement.

² IE - denotes that insufficient evidence was available to inspectors for a judgement to be made.

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interest of learners?	2
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?	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

Annex B

Letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection.

10 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Mary's Bryanston Square CofE School, London, W1H 1DL

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to visit your school. You are proud of your school and you are right to be. St Mary's is a good school where you make good progress from the Nursery to the end of Year 6 because of the good teaching and all the interesting things you learn about. Staff look after you exceptionally well, and that helps to make St Mary's such a happy place to be. What is particularly impressive about your school is the way in which you all get on so well together, even though you all come from so many different backgrounds. We were also pleased to see how very well behaved you are.

The school is well run, and your headteacher and staff team work hard to keep the school as good as it is and to make improvements to make it even better. They keep a careful track of how well each of you is doing so that no one falls behind. We could see that your teachers usually give you learning objectives at the start of lessons and success criteria so that you know how well you have done. These do not always stretch you enough, however, so that is something that we have asked the school to improve.

It was good to see that you know your targets. Your teachers' marking also gives you some very good advice on how you can improve your work. You can help to make your good school even better by being sure to read and follow your teachers' suggestions.

Best wishes for the future.

Yours faithfully

Selwyn Ward
Lead Inspector

