

# St Mary's CofE Junior and Infant School (NC)

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	103403
<b>Local authority</b>	Birmingham
<b>Inspection number</b>	376893
<b>Inspection dates</b>	11–12 July 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Raymond Lau

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 controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	349
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Reverend Cannon Brian Hall
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ava Sturridge-Packer
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	8 November 2006
<b>School address</b>	Hamstead Road Handsworth Birmingham B20 2RW
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## Introduction

Inspection team

Raymond Lau Additional Inspector

Veronica Ruth McGill Additional Inspector

Aileen King Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspection team sampled 17 lessons, observing 12 teachers. Five lessons were observed jointly with members of the senior leadership team. The team also conducted a series of brief observations of learning in classrooms and around the school. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, members of the governing body and staff.

Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line Parent View survey in planning the inspection. They observed the school's work, and looked at improvement plans, records and analyses of pupils' behaviour, the tracking of pupils' progress and examples of pupils' work. They looked at the school's attendance figures and monitoring information. They also analysed questionnaire responses from staff, pupils, and 71 parents and carers.

## Information about the school

This school is larger than the average-sized primary school. Almost all pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. The largest groups represented in the school population are of Black Caribbean, Indian or Pakistani heritage and the large majority speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus is high, with many experiencing moderate learning difficulties. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is much lower in similar schools nationally.

The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. The school holds the Basic Skills Quality Mark 4 and Artsmark Silver. The school has also been designated as a National Support School by the National College for School Leadership. The headteacher is a National Leader of Education and is also executive headteacher of St Michael's CofE Junior and Infant School. St Mary's and St Michael's work in close partnership but are not formally federated. The school operates a breakfast and after-school child care provision, which is managed by the governing body.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>1</b>

## Key findings

- This is an outstanding school. Exceptionally effective teaching and a highly inclusive and stunningly creative learning environment enable the pupils to reach the highest levels of enjoyment and achievement. One pupil summed up the views of many, 'St Mary's helps us to be the best that we can be.'
- From below-average starting points, pupils of all abilities and from all backgrounds make rapid and sustained progress. By the end of Year 6, attainment in English and mathematics is well-above average. Attainment in most other subjects is above average.
- Teachers have high expectations. They use their excellent subject knowledge to capture and stimulate the pupils' curiosity about their learning through activities that enable pupils to develop independent and teamwork skills exceptionally well. Very occasionally, the learning and progress of more-able pupils, especially in Key Stage 1, is limited when activities do not maximise their abilities. While assessment is generally of high quality, the marking of pupils work is occasionally insufficiently focused on helping pupils to improve their performance.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are exemplary. A climate of mutual respect permeates the school. This is evident in pupils' excellent work ethic within lessons, where they contribute remarkably well to their learning and that of others. That they enjoy coming to school is reflected their consistently above average attendance.
- The headteacher is an inspirational leader. She ensures that the partnership with another local school is mutually beneficial. The management of teaching is excellent as it promotes consistency and high standards throughout the school. The highly effective curriculum delivers above-average standards in many subjects and exceptionally strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There are excellent opportunities for pupils from different

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backgrounds to understand and celebrate their shared and diverse cultural heritages.

**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- By September 2014, consolidate outstanding teaching by:
  - ensuring that pupils receive sharper guidance on how to improve their work and sufficient opportunities to respond to the feedback and, thereby, achieve even higher standards
  - ensuring that all activities include tasks that are challenging enough secure the best possible progress for the more-able pupils, especially in Key Stage 1.

**Main report****Achievement of pupils**

Children enter the Nursery with knowledge, understanding and skills that are lower than those normally expected of three-year-olds. Throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage, a highly stimulating environment promotes effective learning and personal development. In the Nursery, for example, children enthusiastically socialise in the soft play area, while others independently use the computers, linking sounds and pictures together well. In Reception, children learn to write simple sentences by using punctuation and simple descriptive language. Reading skills develop well: they successfully blend and separate the sounds of words (phonics). By the time that the children leave Reception, they reach standards that are in line with the national expectations, and this represents good progress.

Pupils continue to make good progress in Key Stage 1. Standards of attainment are rising steadily year on year. Pupils overall attainment and attainment in writing is already securely above average. Attainment in reading and mathematics are also beginning to nudge ahead of national expectations for pupils of this age. In very few lessons, there are times when a very small minority of more-able pupils are limited in their progress, because the work given insufficiently challenges them to achieve higher standards.

Achievement accelerates rapidly through Key Stage 2. At the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment is well-above average. Attainment in reading is well above the national average. The 2012 (unvalidated) test results confirm that all or almost all pupils gained the nationally expected level in English and mathematics. Indeed, the large majority of pupils attained the above-average Level 5 in both core subjects. This represents outstanding achievement in relation to below average starting points on entry to the school. The parents and carers support this view. Pupils readily rise to the challenge to do their best. For example, in a Year 6 class, pupils really 'pulled out all of the stops' when they applied adventurous vocabulary in describing the setting, mood and characters in their writing. The quality of the work over time was exceptional and well above that normally expected of pupils of this age. This is

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evident in the pupils' work of art, design and technology.

The achievement of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is outstanding. This is because staff provide intensely personalised support. Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, and the largest groups within the school of Black Caribbean, Indian or Pakistani heritage, achieve exceptionally well because the curriculum and the teaching enthuses and encapsulates their skills and interests to maximum advantage.

### **Quality of teaching**

Teaching is exceptionally effective and promotes outstanding learning and achievement over time. This view is strongly supported by the parents and carers. Teaching seen during the inspection was never less than good and over half of the lessons were judged to be outstanding. Pupils respond extremely well and so take pride in almost everything that they do. In an excellent Year 2 science lesson, very high levels of questioning and a simple, but telling, experiment stimulated and sustained pupils' curiosity about how sound waves travel and reach the ear. There were gasps of realisation and one pupil stated, 'yes, it is like a message' as the pencil sharpener dropped into a bowl of water to create waves.

Because teachers have exceptional relationships with the pupils, knowing them very well, they are able to plan a wide range of activities that closely meets the needs of almost all learners. The teaching of reading is highly effective as this is promoted across many subjects. Highly collaborative approaches regularly bring out the best in pupils. They become totally engaged, enthused and work superbly well. These characteristics were highly evident in a Year 5/6 English lesson, as pupils were writing a diary entry. Pupils' concentration was excellent as they paid precise attention in their use of 'wow' words in order to express different emotions. One pupil stated, 'I enjoy writing, because lessons are fun. This allows me to be creative and imaginative within my writing.' The quality of the writing in pupils' books clearly demonstrates outstanding achievement. However, on a very few occasions, noticeably in Key Stage 1, activities provide insufficient challenge for the more-able learners because the work given to all pupils is similar and this limits their progress.

The assessment of pupils' work is generally of high quality. However, on occasions the quality of marking, while very positive, does not provide the next steps for learning. This restricts the opportunities for pupils to accelerate their achievement. Where feedback is given to pupils, they are not always given opportunities to act on this information to make improvements.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

The school promotes a highly inclusive climate for trust and learning. One parent summed up the views of many, 'St Mary's promotes confidence in our children and respect for others.' Almost all parents and carers felt strongly that behaviour was excellent and that the school keeps their children safe. The pupils were even more

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supportive of the outstanding behaviour, and this view is shared by the inspection team. Pupils demonstrate exceptionally mature and responsible attitudes to learning and are highly collaborative in supporting their own and each other's learning. One child said, 'We only have kind and thoughtful children.' Behaviour management systems are excellent. Pupils stated that there is an excellent range of rewards and sanctions. Attendance is above average.

Pupils' knowledge of what constitutes safe and unsafe situations, including their awareness of road safety and cyber-bullying is excellent. They say that they feel safe in school and report that bullying in school is very rare. However, should bullying occur, pupils know exactly what to do about it and are confident that the school tackles it effectively. Some pupils are peer mediators and they speak in glowing terms about the school's promotion of equality and diversity. Pupils also raise money for national and international charities. For example, the 'Bizz Kidz' enterprise group raised money to sponsor a child to attend school in another country. The breakfast and after-school childcare provision provides a strong and safe inclusive environment, that enables pupils to develop their creative, physical and social skills.

### **Leadership and management**

The headteacher has been exceptionally successful in creating a vibrant centre for learning, where pupils thrive and reach outstanding levels of achievement. The senior leadership team provides high quality leadership and is influential in driving key school improvement initiatives. The management of teaching is outstanding because the headteacher is strategic and decisive. Leaders and subject coordinators model best practice through a range of initiatives, including team teaching, coaching and mentoring, that impact positively upon the performance of all teachers. The systems for the identification of and support for disabled pupils, and those with special educational needs, are exemplary. Through early identification and excellent support and teaching, these children achieve exceptionally well.

The curriculum has strong national and global dimensions. A key feature is the exceptional spiritual, moral, social and cultural development that permeates teaching. For example, displays and pupils' work on Black and Asian history inspire pride because they cite examples of famous people from these heritages that have significantly influenced modern, democratic Britain. The thematic approach is very well organised and successful in developing pupils' imagination and stimulating their creativity. The development of information and communication technology (ICT), numeracy and literacy skills is embedded across the curriculum, with opportunities for pupils to reinforce their learning across a number of topics. The arrangements for art and for design and technology are of high quality and result in some exceptional work that is proudly displayed across the school. The assemblies provide strong spiritual collective worship that encompasses all religions and faiths. The collective singing is strong and the choir and recorder ensemble performs well. The annual dance show demonstrates pupils' talents.

The governing body is meticulous in ensuring that all safeguarding requirements are

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met. Members of the governing body are astute, highly skilled and challenging, yet supportive, in acting as critical friends to the school. For example, the governing body has embraced the school's capacity to support another school. This initiative has now fostered a very successful relationship that has had a positive impact on raising the quality of teaching in both schools. There are excellent relationships with the overwhelming majority of parents and carers. The school provides numerous courses and events to improve their parenting skills and enable them to support their children's learning.

Since the previous inspection, the school has improved the effectiveness of tracking systems and, in doing so, sustained the highest levels of achievement. Provision for ICT is also a significant area of improvement. The school is exceptional in tackling discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity, because all groups of learners achieve extremely well. This record of success, allied to exceptionally strong leadership, management and governance, indicates that the school's capacity to make further improvements is outstanding.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



13 July 2012

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of St Mary's CofE Junior and Infant School (NC), Birmingham, B20 2RW**

Thank you for welcoming us to your school. We certainly enjoyed our time with you. A special 'thank you' to those who spent a period talking to us, showed us around your school and completed the inspection questionnaire. Here are some of our main findings about your school.

- You go to an outstanding school, where you achieve exceptionally well as a result of a very high quality of teaching.
- The school is highly successful in creating a warm and inspirational learning environment. This is reflected in your excellent art and design and technology work that is very visible across the school.
- Your behaviour and attitudes to learning are outstanding. You are proud ambassadors and a great credit to the school.
- The curriculum is impressive as you have lots of opportunities to learn about each other faiths, cultures and present your work exceptionally well. You sing very well in assembly. The choir and recorder ensemble perform with energy.
- Your school is getting better and better because the headteacher, staff and governing body are extremely successful at driving school improvement.

We have asked your headteacher and staff to improve the school by ensuring that:

- teachers give you more good advice on how to improve your work and the time that you need to do something about it
- those of you, who are more able, are consistently challenged to achieve more.

You can play your part by working hard, enjoying your learning, and making sure that you follows the good advice given to you. I wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Raymond Lau  
Lead inspector

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