

# St Mary's Catholic Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	112358
<b>Local Authority</b>	Cumbria
<b>Inspection number</b>	337911
<b>Inspection dates</b>	18–19 November 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	David Law

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 aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	119
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Mike Smith
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Janette Borodin
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	13 February 2007
<b>School address</b>	Springfield Road Ulverston Cumbria LA12 0EA
<b>Telephone number</b>	01229 894132
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<b>Email address</b>	admin@st-marys.cumbria.sch.uk

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 11 lessons which involved five teachers. They held meetings with groups of pupils, members of the governing body, staff and a representative from the local authority. They observed the school's work and looked at the improvement plan, school policies, safeguarding documents and evidence from the school's self-evaluation. Account was taken of teachers' curriculum planning and their assessments of pupils' progress. Samples of pupils' books were also reviewed. Inspectors evaluated the views of parents and carers by analysing 58 questionnaires. Questionnaires from 66 pupils and 13 staff were also evaluated.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following.

- How well the school is sustaining improvement at a time of significant staff absence and how effectively all leaders, managers and governors play a part in this.
- The views of parents and carers about current staffing arrangements and the impact this has had upon pupils.
- How well pupils apply the key skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology across the curriculum.

## Information about the school

This is a smaller than average primary school. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average, but the percentage with a statement of special educational needs is below average. The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic groups, or who speak English as an additional language, is average. The school has achieved Healthy School status, Activemark and has a Bronze Award for sustainability. Since April 2010, the school has been led by a headteacher from another school for two and a half days a week, due to the long-term absence of the permanent headteacher. Since the last inspection, there has been a significant turn-over of teaching staff.

**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

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**3**

## Main findings

St Mary's is a good school. Happy pupils enjoy learning and their achievement is good. They feel exceptionally safe in school and procedures for keeping them safe are good. Pupils' contribution to the school and the wider community is outstanding, as seen in the pride and eagerness with which they take on responsibility, for example, as members of the school council and eco-committee.

All groups of pupils make good progress in their learning and by the end of Year 6 attainment is above average. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are given effective support and make good progress. Pupils show positive attitudes to learning and behaviour is good. Good teaching underpins pupils' good achievement. It is based on excellent relationships and well-organised lessons that are lively and interesting. Teachers use assessment well to plan further learning. The effective and well-planned curriculum motivates pupils, and they particularly enjoy music and art. Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good, but limited space restricts opportunities for some areas of learning. Pupils enjoy sport and have a good knowledge of how to keep healthy. Good care, guidance and support contribute effectively to pupils' learning and personal development. Pupils use their reading, writing and computing skills across the curriculum and this prepares them well for their future economic well-being. Pupils' enthusiasm for school is seen in their above average attendance. They respect the needs of others and are eager to learn about different cultures. Their spiritual, moral social and cultural development is good.

Capacity to improve is satisfactory. The clear direction provided by the acting headteacher has quickly gained everyone's confidence and strengthened staff morale. The committed staff team works with enthusiasm and has succeeded in maintaining good outcomes for pupils in the absence of the permanent headteacher. Some have taken on new roles of responsibility and provided sound leadership. However, current leadership arrangements are temporary. This has created uncertainty and restricts the pace of planning for improvement. It also means that while self-evaluation is broadly accurate, development planning has not had a sufficiently sharp focus. The strategic re-structuring of the management team and the development of leadership skills are still in the early stages of development. The governing body provides satisfactory support and challenge. The school makes a good contribution to promoting community cohesion and pupils from all backgrounds get on well together.

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

- Further develop leadership roles across the school by:

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- reviewing the leadership structure and, where appropriate, redefining roles and responsibilities
- improving systems and strategies for self-evaluation and improvement planning to involve all staff and governors
- supporting those new to subject leadership through early professional development.
- Provide more opportunities for learning outdoors in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
  - reviewing current spaces available across the school
  - implementing a plan to develop a more effective outdoor resource
  - ensuring that this continues to be funded and developed over time.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****2**

Pupils achieve well in their learning and enjoy what they do. Inspectors observed that they listen well and show high levels of concentration and cooperation. Their eagerness to do their best, together with good and frequently outstanding behaviour, ensures new learning is acquired at a brisk rate. When solving problems, pupils are tenacious in applying themselves. For example, in Year 3, pupils worked well together using laptops to solve problems about using money. All pupils enjoy explaining their thinking to others and are confident in doing so. On entry to Reception, children's attainment is broadly in line with what is expected at this age and, whatever their starting points, all groups of children make good progress. Good progress continues throughout Key Stages 1 and 2 and at the end of Year 6 national tests results are above average. Pupils thoroughly enjoy reading and acquire a good understanding of letter and sounds. They are able to use their skills well to write for a range of purposes. Pupils are exceptionally eager to take responsibility, for example, as playground friends. They are keen to raise money for charity and often do this by applying ideas they have developed for themselves. They work and play well together, being helpful to each other and tolerant and respectful. Consequently, the school has a strong sense of community and a very positive ethos. Pupils' good achievement and behaviour, and well-developed social skills prepare them effectively for the next stage of their education.

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*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

## How effective is the provision?

Good teaching, together with high expectations, is seen across the school and the pace of learning in lessons is brisk. Teachers show good subject knowledge and plan carefully to meet the needs of all pupils. There is very effective use of a range of technology, such as computers and interactive whiteboards. Lessons are often lively and pupils are engaged well through activities that they enjoy and find interesting. Teaching assistants work effectively with groups of pupils and provide particularly helpful support for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Assessment is used well to plan learning for different groups and individuals. Teachers are adept at adjusting what they do in lessons after carefully assessing how well pupils are learning. The marking of pupils' work is thorough and shows them how they can improve. The curriculum is matched effectively to pupils' needs and helps them to make good progress and develop well personally. There is a wide range of enrichment activities, including music, sport and visits to places of interest. Good care, guidance and support ensure that pupils develop well personally and the school provides a welcoming place for them to learn. Provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well organised and effective in enabling them to make good progress. Transition arrangements as pupils move through the school are good and based on a secure understanding of individual needs. Effective procedures are in place to ensure good attendance.

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*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

There have been significant absences and changes of staff since the last inspection and temporary arrangements are still in place. Experienced staff have led and managed the school on a day-to-day basis while retaining responsibilities for teaching their classes. Members of the governing body have successfully brokered the services of an experienced headteacher from another school for part of each week and she is providing a strong and effective lead. All staff, including those recently appointed to the school, are working in a committed and enthusiastic way. Everyone is striving hard to make sure pupils do not miss out and provision and outcomes remain good. However, the current temporary staffing structure makes it difficult to plan for longer-term development and improvements. There is satisfactory self-evaluation and a relevant improvement plan but not all staff are systematically involved in the self-evaluation process.

The governing body provides satisfactory challenge and support and has a clear commitment to pupils, their families and the community. Good partnerships include other schools, the church and links with a range of agencies to support vulnerable pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. These make a good contribution to pupils' personal development. The school promotes community cohesion well because it knows its local context and there are good opportunities to learn about the range of cultures in Britain and elsewhere. All pupils have equal opportunity to learn and there is no discrimination. They show an excellent understanding of how to keep safe and procedures for safeguarding are good because there is effective training and staff roles are clearly defined. Taking account of the outcomes for pupils, the school provides good value for money.

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*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## **Early Years Foundation Stage**

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. In most years, children enter reception with skills in line with those expected for their age, although a minority are below. All children make good progress in their learning and enjoy everything they do. By the time they enter Year 1, attainment is above average. Children rapidly become confident, play in harmony and learn how to be independent. They feel entirely safe and know adults will listen carefully to them. Good teaching is evident and learning is well-planned. Children and adults enter into play and learning with great enthusiasm, for example, during the inspection when they learnt about Diwali and the teacher took the role of Mr Sharma. Assessment is exemplary and used well to meet children's individual needs. Planning for the range of pupils across reception and Year 1 is excellent. However, the area for outdoor learning is too small, thereby restricting what could be achieved. Despite this, staff compensate wherever possible by planning alternative outdoor learning in other areas of the school. Children learn to listen carefully and acquire a firm interest in reading books and writing things down. Good leadership ensures that adults work as a team. Good induction procedures, including strong links with pre-school provision, ensure a smooth transition into the school. Links with parents and carers are good with regular newsletters informing them about what is being planned for children's learning.



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*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

## Views of parents and carers

Almost all parents and carers feel the school keeps their children safe. Most say it helps children to have a healthy lifestyle, enjoy school and be well-prepared for the future. Inspectors endorse these views. A few parents and carers feel that the school does not deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors found behaviour to be good and that the school has procedures to deal with the rare instances when this is not the case. Similarly, a small minority say the school does not take account of their suggestions and concerns. Inspectors found that the school has suitable systems in place to enable parents to express their concerns and some parents wrote to inspectors to say how friendly and approachable they felt the school to be. However, almost one quarter of parents responding to the questionnaire did not agree that the school was led and managed effectively. Some wrote to express concern that staff absence was affecting performance. A number also wrote in praise of the leadership provided by the acting headteacher. The main cause for concern for parents and carers was the uncertainty about future leadership. Inspectors found that the school is led and managed satisfactorily, although the current staffing situation is slowing down planning for sustained improvement.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Mary's Catholic Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 58 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 119 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	40	69	16	28	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	35	60	22	38	0	0	1	2
My school informs me about my child's progress	19	33	35	60	2	3	2	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	23	40	30	52	3	5	2	3
The teaching is good at this school	28	48	27	47	1	2	2	3
The school helps me to support my child's learning	24	41	28	48	2	3	2	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	30	52	25	43	2	3	1	2
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	26	45	23	40	1	2	1	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	22	38	32	55	3	5	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	12	21	31	53	7	12	5	9
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	15	26	33	57	5	9	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	10	17	30	52	13	22	2	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	30	52	25	43	2	3	1	2

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## 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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the 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:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.

**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.**



22 November 2010

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Ulverston, LA12 0EA**

My colleague inspector and I enjoyed our visit to your school. Thank you for making us welcome. You contributed well to the inspection by being eager to talk to us. We found that your school is providing you with a good education. We saw that you enjoy being at school and these are some of the things we think you do well.

- You are exceptionally proud of your school and your ability to take responsibility and help others make it a welcoming place.
- You say you feel exceptionally safe in school and that you trust adults to help you if there is a problem.
- You are making good progress in your learning, enjoy your lessons and behave well in the classroom and around the school.
- The teaching and curriculum are good with interesting things for you to learn.

We have two recommendations to help the school to improve further.

- We have asked the leaders, managers and the governing body to develop ways to improve the school further both now and in the future.
- We would like to see the outdoor area in the Early Years Foundation Stage improved so there are more space and opportunities for learning.

I hope you will work hard to help bring about these improvements. Best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

David Law

Lead inspector

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