

# Boston St Mary's RC Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	120615
<b>Local authority</b>	Lincolnshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	380074
<b>Inspection dates</b>	15–16 March 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Keith Brown

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>	210
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	John Poucher
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sarah Jane Lammond
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	6 June 2007
<b>School address</b>	Ashlawn Drive Boston PE21 9PX
<b>Telephone number</b>	01205 362092
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<b>Email address</b>	Enquiries@st-marys-pri.lincs.sch.uk

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## Introduction

Inspection team

Keith Brown

Additional inspector

Andrew Read

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors visited 14 lessons taught by seven teachers. Scrutinies of pupils' work in English and mathematics were carried out. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, members of the governing body, staff and a local authority adviser. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. They observed the school's work, and looked at documents, including policies and procedures relating to the safeguarding of pupils, self-evaluation records and assessment information. The inspectors analysed responses to questionnaires from 90 parents and carers, 114 pupils and nine staff.

## Information about the school

This Roman Catholic school is smaller than the average sized primary school. It admits pupils from across Boston and the surrounding villages. Around two thirds of the pupils are from White British backgrounds and the rest are from a variety of other heritages. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is above average and increasing, as is the number who speak English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is low. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is broadly average. The school meets the current floor standard. Among its awards, the school has Investors in People, and National Healthy School status and the UNICEF Rights Respecting award. The before-school care club is managed by the governing body.

## Inspection judgements

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>

## Key findings

- This is a good school which has made improvements in key areas of its work since the last inspection. It is well placed to improve further. The school is not yet outstanding because there is not enough teaching at the highest level to ensure that pupils' achievement is outstanding.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. All groups make good progress from their different starting points and leave school at the end of Year 6 with attainment that is above average in English and mathematics.
- Teaching is good overall. It has some outstanding features, such as the precise questioning of pupils which helps them to move on quickly in their learning. Where teaching is occasionally satisfactory, too much teacher direction slows the pace of learning or the work could be more closely matched to the needs and abilities of the pupils.
- Behaviour and safety are good. Both in lessons and around the school, pupils' behaviour creates a positive learning and playing environment. They are courteous and friendly to visitors. Pupils feel safe and understand how to stay safe. The school has worked hard to improve the rate of attendance, which is now above average overall. However, attendance in Reception and in Years 1 and 2 is below average.
- Leadership and management are good at all levels. Observations of teaching are accurate and inform school development planning. Performance management objectives meet individual staff's developmental needs as well as the school's priorities. The curriculum, including extra-curricular provision, provides well-developed learning experiences which engage pupils' interest well.

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

- Accelerate the progress made by pupils and raise attainment by ensuring that teachers consistently:

- share the best practice in teaching across the school
  - use assessment information to set work that is closely matched to pupils' abilities and needs
  - make sure all parts of the lesson engage and challenge pupils.
- Use the good links with parents and carers to intensify efforts to raise the levels of attendance of younger pupils to the national average.

## Main report

### Achievement of pupils

The overwhelming majority of parents and carers justifiably believe that their children are making good progress at the school.

Children's skills and knowledge on entry to Reception are often below those expected for children of their age. Children make good progress in all areas of learning in Reception. They work cooperatively and increasingly independently. Adults assess children's progress regularly and use this information well in targeting learning. There is good emphasis on supporting children's communication skills. For example, children particularly enjoyed singing rhymes and this helped their recognition of words. Support for those children learning English as an additional language is effective.

Pupils enter Year 1 with attainment around the levels expected for their age. Good progress continues through Key Stage 1. In a Year 1 reading lesson, a group of pupils who find reading more difficult made good progress in identifying vowels and placing them between consonants. A Year 2 lesson showed pupils' good understanding of the differences in the spelling of words that sound similar. More-able pupils showed a good, developing understanding of the different types of prose and their characteristics. While some pupils' reading skills are above average for their age, overall they are average by the end of Key Stage 1.

Pupils make good progress throughout Key Stage 2 and the school's performance in the national English and mathematics tests for pupils in Year 6 is above average. However, English results fell in 2011. The work of pupils currently in Year 6 and the school's assessment records, show that they are on track to reach above average levels of attainment in English. Attainment in reading is above average at the end of Year 6.

The learning observed in lessons was good. There is no significant difference in the progress made by different groups of pupils. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress in lessons and are closing the gap on pupils nationally. This is because tasks are matched closely to their prior attainment and teaching assistants are deployed well. They help pupils by demonstrating skills precisely, teaching subject specialist vocabulary and providing appropriate challenge and encouragement. Good quality visual cues and plenty of opportunities for discussion help to include pupils who speak English as an additional language so that

they also achieve well.

### **Quality of teaching**

Good teaching from the Early Years Foundation Stage onwards results in pupils' good progress throughout the school. Almost all of the parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire rightly feel that pupils are taught well and their children fully agree.

The good working relationships established between staff and pupils build confidence and contribute to pupils' positive attitudes to learning, the good progress in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and the overall good quality of the teaching. Pace and challenge are well matched to pupils' abilities and the range of activities ensures that pupils make rapid progress. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils of all abilities can achieve. In lessons, they make sure pupils understand clearly what they are expected to learn. At regular points in the lesson, teachers review pupils' learning to keep the level of challenge appropriate. For example, in an outstanding Year 2 English lesson, the teacher's brisk and probing questioning ensured that a very close check was kept on pupils' understanding of how to write a review on a play they had just seen. Any misunderstandings were quickly corrected. On a few occasions, where teaching is only satisfactory, the pace of learning slows. This is where parts of the lesson are too teacher directed or where teachers do not use assessment information to set work that is closely matched to pupils' abilities and needs.

Good curriculum organisation supports teaching well and leads to pupils gaining knowledge and developing understanding effectively. The careful organisation of groups for the teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make), for example, supports pupils' progress well. They practise the skills they learn very competently. Marking of pupils' work is thorough and helpful, using praise well and providing clear guidance for improvement. Pupils have a clear understanding of what they need to do next to improve. They know their personal targets well and enjoy the opportunities provided to assess their own work.

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

The vast majority of parents and carers, pupils and staff, in their response to the questionnaires, confirmed that they are highly positive about behaviour and safety in the school.

Behaviour in and out of lessons is good. Pupils respond well to the school's strategies for managing behaviour. From the Early Years Foundation Stage onwards, regular routines and expectations, together with clearly understood rewards and sanctions, result in a positive, supportive and happy atmosphere for learning and playing. Inspectors saw only very rare instances of disruption to learning in lessons, all of which were well managed by staff. The school's log of behavioural incidents and other records show that behaviour is good over time. Pupils report that bullying is restricted to rare instances of name-calling, with no homophobic or racist intent. The school's clear anti-bullying policy is rigorously enforced.

There is close liaison with external agencies to meet the needs of pupils whose circumstances make them most vulnerable and potentially disaffected. The school can point to striking examples of where it has helped pupils to manage their own behaviour better, so that their progress in lessons has improved. The school environment is well-ordered and safe. Pupils have a good understanding about what constitutes unsafe situations and talk confidently about how to keep safe when facing dangers such as fire, potential drowning or traffic.

The school has put in place a number of effective strategies to improve attendance. Attendance is now above average overall but the attendance of Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 pupils is still below average. Despite good partnership work overall, the school's work with parents and carers to improve the attendance of younger pupils is not yet as rigorous as it could be.

### **Leadership and management**

The headteacher is ably supported by the senior leadership team and middle leaders. All staff are focused on further improvement and work together well. Morale is high. Plans are evaluated rigorously and followed through. The headteacher and other leaders monitor the quality of lessons, review teachers' planning, and scrutinise pupils' work effectively. The school is starting to systematically share the best practice found in lessons to increase the proportion of outstanding teaching. Assessment and tracking of pupils' progress have improved since the last inspection, as have reading and writing in Key Stage 2. Teachers have been able to develop their expertise through well-targeted professional development, including training on teaching phonics. The headteacher's informative reports, together with other relevant information, enable the governing body to monitor progress towards targets within the school development plan. The governing body provides good strategic direction and challenge and is involved fully and systematically in evaluating the school's effectiveness. Accordingly, the school has good capacity for further improvement.

Promotion of equality of opportunity is at the heart of the school's work, creating a harmonious and positive atmosphere. The school is inclusive and there is no evidence of discrimination. Safeguarding policies and procedures are good. They are reviewed regularly, so that adults and pupils have a good understanding of safety issues.

The school's good curriculum builds effectively on pupils' previous learning and prepares them well for the next stages in their education. Pupils say that they enjoy the themed days and weeks that are a regular feature of the curriculum. For example, a recent 'World Culture' day, helped everyone to learn much more about the languages spoken by pupils at the school and the features of different cultures. The curriculum is extended by a good range of art, music, dance and sport activities, as well as by visits and visitors. The well-attended 'Early Birds' before-school care club is efficiently organised and supervised and provides pupils with a range of purposeful activities. It helps working families and has also boosted punctuality. The curriculum promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well, especially in the first two elements.





## 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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	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 2010 to 31 August 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.
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.**



19 March 2012

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Boston St Mary's RC Primary School, Boston, PE21 9PX**

Thank you very much for the friendly welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. A special thank you goes to those who met with us. Your views have been very helpful.

The school is providing a good education for you. From the Early Years Foundation Stage, teaching is good. You make good progress and reach above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6. You are happy and feel safe at school. Pupils behaved well in the lessons we visited. Your school ensures that you are well-prepared for secondary school.

The headteacher, staff and the governing body are determined for the school to become better. We have asked your teachers to work together to share their best practice and to ensure that all parts of every lesson engage and challenge you. We have also asked your teachers to use their knowledge of how well you are doing to give you work that makes you think and is just at the right level of difficulty.

You can help by coming to school every day, particularly those of you in Reception and in Years 1 and 2. Do continue to work hard and try your best. Please check your work carefully and tell your teachers if you need them to explain some of the work in more detail.

I wish you all well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Keith Brown  
Lead inspector

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