

# St Maxentius CofE Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	105231
<b>Local Authority</b>	Bolton
<b>Inspection number</b>	355731
<b>Inspection dates</b>	30–31 March 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Adrian Guy HMI

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>	Rev David Dunn
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Clare Bennett
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	6 December 2007
<b>School address</b>	New Heys Way Bradshaw, Bolton Lancashire BL2 4AE
<b>Telephone number</b>	01204 333106
<b>Fax number</b>	01204 333107
<b>Email address</b>	office@st-maxentius.bolton.sch.uk

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. The inspectors observed 15 lessons and eight teachers. They saw teaching in each of the seven classes in the school. This included joint observations with the headteacher. They held meetings with school staff, members of the governing body, groups of pupils and held a telephone conversation with the School Improvement Partner. They observed the school's work and scrutinised a number of documents such as those relating to safeguarding pupils; the teachers' assessments of pupils' attainment and their progress; the school improvement plan and documents identified by the school to justify its self-evaluation. Inspectors also took into consideration the 79 questionnaires returned by parents and carers and also those returned by pupils and staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Whether, given their starting points, all pupils are supported and challenged sufficiently in their learning so that they are able to make consistently good progress and attain the highest standards of which they are capable.
- Whether the school's provision ensures equality of opportunity and enables pupils, especially those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, to make good progress.
- Whether, through self-evaluation, leaders, managers and governors have an accurate grasp the school's strengths and weaknesses and can demonstrate a capacity for sustained improvement.
- Whether provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage meets the needs of all children and enables them to make good progress.
- Whether the school is effectively developing pupils' understanding of diversity and promoting all aspects of community cohesion.

## Information about the school

St Maxentius is a slightly smaller than average Church of England aided primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is much lower than the national average. The proportion of pupils from a minority ethnic background is very low, as is the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language. The percentage with a statement of special educational needs is higher than the national average. However, in comparison to most schools, the proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is slightly lower. The number of children joining and leaving the school outside of the normal times is much lower than the national average. In 2010, the school was awarded Healthy School status.

Since the last inspection there have been significant changes in staff. Four teachers have left, one member of staff is currently on maternity leave and another had recently returned from maternity leave and is teaching part time. These absences have been covered by supply 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?****3****The school's capacity for sustained improvement****3**

## Main findings

St Maxentius School provides a satisfactory quality of education. Many aspects of the school's work are good, particularly those concerning pupils' personal development and well-being, the curriculum, the care, guidance and support for pupils and safeguarding procedures. Some pupil outcomes, for example, their spiritual development, are outstanding. Overall, parents and carers have a positive view of the school and one typical comment stated: 'I think it is a lovely school, all the children seem happy and the teachers have a lovely relationship with the children'.

Although pupils' attainment has fluctuated in the past year, it remains above average. In 2010, most of the pupils leaving the school in Year 6 gained the expected level for their age in both English and mathematics and many gained higher levels in English.

Although the majority of children make good progress, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage, there remain groups and areas where progress is satisfactory. These include pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and some older boys. Progress in English and mathematics varies for these groups. Consequently, from overall starting points that are generally above those typical for their age, pupils' achievement is satisfactory.

The school takes good care of its pupils and enables them to progress well in aspects of their personal development. Successful partnerships with a range of outside agencies promote pupils' health and well-being and result in pupils knowing what they need to do to be healthy. Pupils contribute well to their local community and take full advantage of a wide range of clubs and activities beyond the classroom. Pupils say they feel safe and behave well in school. They are polite, considerate and get on together very well indeed. Where there are incidents of unacceptable behaviour, pupils are very confident that these are dealt with effectively by staff. Their high attendance, together with skills such as teamwork and cooperation, mean they develop good skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. This is fostered by the school's strong Christian ethos, a well-developed curriculum particularly in regard to religious education and music, extra-curricular activities and high levels of pastoral support. The school has undertaken effective work to widen pupils' understanding of other faiths and human rights but recognises that there is further work to be done in developing pupils' understanding of wider cultural diversity.

The quality of teaching varies, but is satisfactory overall. In the best lessons pupils are enthusiastically engaged in their learning and activities are well planned, interesting and challenging. Where teaching is less effective, pupils are not as well challenged and

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motivated and so progress is slower. Often the planning of pupils' next steps in sequences of their learning is underdeveloped, which impacts on the progress of some pupils.

Senior leaders have an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They have secured improvements in many aspects of the school's pastoral work and curriculum provision. However, they are aware that improvements in teaching, learning and pupils' progress have taken longer to gather momentum and are putting in place suitable strategies to address this. Although the school successfully promotes community cohesion within the local community, this is underdeveloped in terms of wider cultural links.

Improvements since the last inspection together with the school's secure grasp of areas for continued improvement demonstrate that the school has a satisfactory capacity to raise standards further.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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

- Ensure that all pupils make good progress by:
  - increasing the proportion of good teaching, ensuring that all teachers are aware of the next steps required in sequences of learning
  - ensuring that teaching consistently challenges all pupils and extends their learning
  - making sure that the learning needs of groups such as boys and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are fully met.
- Further strengthen pupils' understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity by:
  - broadening the scope of activities to include all strands of community cohesion
  - developing systems to enable governors to monitor aspects of the school's work and provide additional scrutiny and challenge.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****3**

Pupils are well motivated, have good attitudes to learning and respond positively when they are engaged and well taught. These qualities, together with their good behaviour, excellent attendance and their cooperative abilities, contribute well to their learning.

When they start, children's skills and knowledge are, in general, slightly above those typical for their age. Pupils progress well when they first enter the school. However, this rate is not consistently maintained across the school. Although many pupils do continue to make good progress, in some classes and groups progress is only satisfactory. This is shown by the school's own information and is confirmed by inspectors' observations in lessons. This is also the case for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, many of whom receive additional support. Pupils achieve well in other areas of the curriculum, particularly in their personal and social development, religious education and music.

Pupils participate enthusiastically in school and community life. They take their school council, environmental improvement and fund-raising roles seriously. The recently formed

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Eco team are eager to start recycling paper and ensure energy is saved by turning off lights. Most pupils participate in a wide variety of clubs. In learning about healthy living they know about the dangers of alcohol and drugs and take plenty of exercise.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a particular strength of the school. This is due in part to a strong Christian ethos, which is evident in some very eye-catching displays around the school, positive relationships and a strong focus on maintaining a cohesive school community. The school has focused on human rights and respecting the faith of others. However, pupil's understanding of wider aspects of diversity is less strongly developed and is the focus of further work planned by the school.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</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>2</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>	1
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>1</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?**

Although there are examples of good teaching across the school, there is too much variation between classes and within subjects. Consequently, the quality of teaching overall is satisfactory. Where teaching is most effective, teachers use assessment information well to ensure that all groups of pupils are working at a suitably challenging level. For example, in a well-planned lesson on problem solving, pupils enjoyed the challenge of describing mathematical shapes and patterns as part of a game. However, where teaching is satisfactory the pace of learning often slows because there is an overemphasis on 'teacher talk', the progression of learning to enable pupils to achieved

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desired outcomes is not sufficiently clear, and help for pupils, though supportive and reassuring, is not sufficiently challenging to enable them to progress well.

The school has identified that the quality of marking and feedback to pupils has not been consistent and has recently introduced a new policy which has yet to impact upon pupils' learning and progress.

The curriculum is well balanced and planned in consultation with the children to take account of their ideas and adjusted to meet their needs. For example, the school has modified the syllabus for religious education to emphasise world faiths to develop pupils' understanding beyond their immediate community, as in Year 6, pupils are given opportunities to reflect and apply learning about Islam to their own experiences. Their responses are thoughtful and considered. The curriculum is further enhanced by a rich and varied programme of extra-curricular activities which is taken up by most pupils. Music is a strength and the school orchestra performs well together and shows a good grasp of rhythm and ensemble playing.

Good care, guidance and support for pupils are at the heart of the school's ethos. The impact of the school's supportive and nurturing approach is evident in pupils' strong personal development. The school has worked successfully with parents, carers and the local authority to promote pupils' attendance.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<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?

The school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis and a safe and caring learning environment, has been created in line with the school's Christian ethos. The school is effectively led by the headteacher and leadership team who show a strong commitment to pupils' well-being and continued school improvement.

The school's systems for tracking pupils' progress and monitoring the implementation of school improvement plans are becoming embedded and yielding information that the school is using well to target its action for further improvement.

The school has a number of new governors. The current Chair and vice-chair of the Governing Body are keen to develop their roles, although they recognise that this is at an early stage of development. Since the last inspection they have taken concerted action to ensure that safeguarding procedures are effective and rigorous. These are now good and a strength of the school. However, they are aware of the need to further develop other systems to ensure that there is more effective and objective scrutiny and challenge of the

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school's work. The school has satisfactory policies and procedures in relation to promoting equality and tackling discrimination.

The school provides opportunities for parents and carers to come into the school each term which were evident in the many positive comments from parents and carers. Reports and newsletters keep parents and carers informed appropriately and a 'parents' forum' gives them the chance to make their views known. Partnerships with local schools have given the school the opportunity to access staff training and curriculum development programmes the school alone could not provide. They have supported effective transition to the next stage of education and enriched the variety of extra-curricular clubs.

The school's inclusive ethos means that pupils are treated equally and learn to respect each other. However, some groups, particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, do not progress as well as others, relative to their starting points. There is a strong sense of a cohesive community within the school. The school is aware of the need to widen this focus and provide further opportunities for pupils to develop wider perspectives and develop positive attitudes and dispositions which enable them to live in, and make a positive contribution to, a diverse community.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</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>3</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>3</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children settle well in the Early Years Foundation Stage and they make a positive start to their schooling. They progress well and by the end of the Reception Year achieve outcomes above those typically expected for their age. Teaching is often good and there is a wide range of stimulating activities on offer. Children are well cared for and procedures for ensuring their safety and well-being are rigorously followed. Children enjoy learning and parents and carers are kept well informed of their child's progress through 'learning journey' folders that celebrate their achievements. During the inspection the children took



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part in an outstanding Mothers' Day assembly which allowed them to express their feelings and gratitude and to reflect on the spiritual aspects of caring. During the maternity leave of the Early Years Foundation Stage leader, the class has been taught by two part-time supply teachers supported by a higher level teaching assistant. The school has managed this situation satisfactorily and is aware of the need to ensure effective communication and planning which includes all staff.

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

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>3</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	3

## Views of parents and carers

The proportion of questionnaires received from parents and carers was higher than average. Inspectors also spoke to some parents and carers and considered their responses along with those expressed in the questionnaires. The very large majority of parents and carers are supportive of the school. They agree that their children enjoy school, are kept safe and are encouraged to stay healthy. A small minority disagreed that the school is led and managed effectively and that the school takes account of their concerns. Inspectors examined these issues carefully. They found secure evidence that leadership and management are at least satisfactory and in some areas they are good. It has developed successful strategies for engaging parents, such as the parent's forum which actively seeks their views.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Maxentius CoE 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 79 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 210 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	45	57	34	43	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	49	62	29	37	1	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	28	35	48	61	2	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	32	41	35	44	9	11	2	3
The teaching is good at this school	28	35	48	61	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	21	27	48	61	9	11	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	30	38	46	58	3	4	0	0
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)	23	29	37	47	4	5	2	3
The school meets my child's particular needs	29	37	42	53	7	9	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	19	24	46	58	6	8	3	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	22	28	35	44	11	14	2	3
The school is led and managed effectively	22	28	35	44	15	19	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	31	39	40	51	6	8	1	1

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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 August 2010 and 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 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## 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.**



1 April 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of St Maxentius CoFE Primary School, Bolton, BL2 4AE**

Thank you for welcoming the inspection team to your school recently. You may remember us coming to check how well you are all learning. We learned a lot from watching your lessons, talking to you about your work and life at school and looking at your work.

Your school provides you with a satisfactory education. The adults take good care of you. Your well-being is really important to them. We were pleased to see that you behave and get along together very well indeed. You are given interesting things to learn about and a great range of clubs and activities to join in with. I was very impressed by your orchestra and your Mothers' Day assembly was outstanding.

We could see that many things are improving at your school. Your spiritual, moral and social development is outstanding and your attendance is excellent. Well done!

These are the things we have agreed with your headteacher and the governors that your school should improve next:

- make sure you all make good progress
- learn even more about the diversity in cultures and communities beyond your school.

I am sure that you will have some good ideas about how to improve your school. I hope you will contribute them through the school council. All the inspectors wish you the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Adrian Guy

Her Majesty's Inspector

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