

# St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Chorley

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	119672
<b>Local Authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	367418
<b>Inspection dates</b>	18–19 May 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Terry McDermott

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>	Mrs Margaret Rogerson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Patrick Smyth
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	5 November 2007
<b>School address</b>	Hornchurch Drive Chorley Lancashire PR7 2RJ
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Fourteen lessons were observed taught by seven teachers. All teachers were observed, almost all of them twice. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, staff and representatives of the governing body. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at its methods for tracking pupils' progress, at a range of school documents, including its policies, minutes of governing body meetings, monitoring records, an extensive sample of pupils' work, and reports from the School Improvement Partner. Fifty eight responses from the parents and carers to the Ofsted questionnaire were received and considered, along with questionnaires completed by staff and pupils.

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

- The accuracy of the school's self-evaluation of the quality of learning experienced by pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- How well the curriculum supports pupils' personal development and well-being through their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness.
- How well the school's leaders have sustained and extended the strengths and overcome the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection.

## Information about the school

This is an average sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. The proportion of pupils from a minority ethnic heritage is well below average. Almost all pupils speak English at home as their first language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average, although the proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is above average. A new headteacher and deputy headteacher have been appointed since the last inspection. The school holds several awards including the Basic Skills Quality mark and the Activemark.

The school hosts pre-school (Nursery) provision, a pre-school breakfast club and an after-school club. These are not managed by the governing body of the school and were not part of this inspection.

**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**

**2**

## Main findings

St Mary's is a good school. Pupils like coming to its welcoming and vibrant learning environment. This is reflected by the pupils' high rates of attendance. They achieve well in their academic work and in building their personal skills. They are very polite, well-mannered and considerate to each other. Their consistently good behaviour is particularly noticeable in lessons where they are keen to do well. Pupils enter the Reception class with skills close to those typical for their age. By the time they leave Year 6, their attainment in English and mathematics is above average. The progress made by pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities is good, especially in English.

Teaching has several strengths. Teachers are enthusiastic, have good subject knowledge, excellent relationships with the pupils, and generally move lessons forward quickly. Most lessons give pupils many opportunities to solve interesting problems independently. This ensures that learning is very often good and sometimes even better. Occasionally, teachers spend too long telling pupils what they are going to be doing instead of letting them get on with it. In a few cases, teachers do not use assessment information effectively enough, and all pupils, regardless of ability, receive the same instruction or task. Some find the work too easy, some find it too hard. This slows the pace of learning.

The curriculum focuses strongly on the basic skills, and also provides a wealth of additional experiences in sport and the arts. It supports pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness, and underpins their good all-round personal development. The curriculum is currently being modifying to ensure that pupils have more opportunities to practice and develop their skills across a range of situations.

Pupils quickly learn to respect those who are different from themselves. They reflect deeply on issues they encounter, and recognise and celebrate the achievement of others spontaneously. They treat those less fortunate than themselves with considerable generosity and kindness, because of the good care, guidance and support they experience for themselves.

Senior leaders and members of the governing body have a very accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, because their evaluations are based firmly on pupils' learning. The school has consolidated its previous good practice during a time of change. Previously identified weaknesses have been addressed, and the school is actively seeking to be even more effective in all aspects of its work. All adults in the school work together closely and have a strong team spirit. The school has good capacity to improve further.

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

- Ensure that more lessons are good or outstanding by:
  - reducing the time teachers spend explaining what pupils are going to do and increasing the time pupils spend actively engaged in learning
  - making more effective use of information about what pupils already know and can do, to set tasks which consistently meet their individual needs.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**2**

Pupils' very good attitudes to learning ensure that lessons run smoothly and their work is productive. Learning is mostly good and at times outstanding. Pupils respond quickly to guidance or instruction from the teacher. They listen carefully to each other's views and opinions. They work sensibly when not directly supervised. This was seen to particularly good effect in an outstanding Year 6 art lesson, when pupils used real fruit and vegetables to create their own works in the style of Guiseppe Arcimboldo. After a brief exploration of the style using the interactive whiteboard, pupils rapidly sketched and planned in two-dimensions, created and modelled in three-dimensions, before independently producing their final piece. This lesson demonstrated clearly the high quality of learning that occurs when expectations and challenge are high.

Pupils say they enjoy coming to school because 'it's so nice to be here'. Though they say there is some bullying, they are quite certain that it is always dealt with quickly and effectively. They are well aware what to do should it occur. They can explain why they know they are safe in school. They are aware of the dangers they may face outside school and what steps to take to avoid them. They have a good understanding of how to lead healthy lives and even pupils in Year 1 can identify different food groups and know how to create a balanced meal. Pupils are proud of their school, the charities they choose to support, and the donations they make to relief work overseas. Their involvement in activities in the local area is strong through 'The Good Shepherd' and growing links with a special school. Their understanding of the different cultures they are likely to meet within the United Kingdom and across the globe is good, even though direct contacts are limited. When they leave school they are well-balanced and thoughtful young citizens with above average levels of attainment. They are well prepared for the next stage of their education and their lives.

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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>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>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?

Classrooms are colourful, attractive and welcoming, with many resources to support learning. Lessons are calm and well ordered, because of the good relationships between pupils and adults. In the best lessons, pupils quickly and enthusiastically engage with a range of different tasks which encourage them to think for themselves. In a small number of other lessons, learning is slowed through a combination of weaker planning, and extended explanations. Together these reduce the time pupils have for independent investigation and problem solving.

The curriculum has a strong and successful focus on building pupils' basic skills and on securing Catholic values of respect for diversity, understanding and tolerance of difference, and compassion. It is currently being improved further to ensure that subjects are linked together in themes to give pupils more opportunities to practise the skills they have learnt in one subject across several other subjects.

The school knows the pupils and their families well, because of the strong links the school sustains with them. This allows adults to quickly identify and address any personal issues which might arise. Arrangements for supporting pupils who are potentially vulnerable due to their circumstances are positive and effective, and recognised as such by parents and carers. This ensures that these pupils can access everything the school has to offer, and are able to make the same good progress as their peers. Transitions are well managed

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and ensure that pupils transfer from one class to another and on to secondary education, with the minimum of misunderstanding.

*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?

The headteacher and senior leaders are committed to giving all pupils the best possible start to their education. They have been successful in establishing clear procedures for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school, and in giving responsibility to staff at all levels. Consequently, staff morale is high as they work together extending the strengths of the school, and tackling areas of inconsistency.

The governing body is effective in ensuring that the school meets all statutory requirements, whilst offering the correct balance of support and challenge. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils' well-being are good. All the required checks are carried out quickly and thoroughly. Procedures for child protection are rigorous. As a result, pupils and their families are confident that they are safe and secure. The school makes good provision to give equality of opportunity. Every pupil has the support necessary to make good progress. The school works relentlessly to ensure that pupils understand that discrimination and inequality must be confronted. It is successful because there is no discrimination, harassment or bias. The effectiveness of the school's provision for community cohesion is good. Good local links are extended well globally through the work of CAFOD and other charities, and through the curriculum via geography, history, art and religious education. These links are being replicated nationally, as the school increases the pupils' understanding of cultural diversity within the United Kingdom. The school gives 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>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<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>2</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**

Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage because teaching and resources are good, despite the restricted outdoor environment limiting continuity of learning. Children join the Reception class with skills and understanding that are in line with those expected for their age, though in some years their skills can be higher. Adults are very supportive, have good links with parents and carers, and quickly establish excellent relationships with the children. Consequently children feel safe, they play and learn together in harmony, and rapidly develop well-tempered confidence and self-esteem. This was seen to outstanding effect when the whole of the Reception class actively led an emotional assembly on 'Energy' with minimal support from adults. Every pupil in the school, plus over 60 parents and carers were in the audience. The performance was magnificent, the effect electric, the level of justifiable pride, bursting.

Leadership and management are good. Learning and progress are monitored carefully, and the information gained is used well to inform the planning of future lessons. The school's leaders have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of provision, and know what needs to be done to improve it. Welfare requirements are met.



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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

A broadly average proportion of parents and carers responded to the Ofsted questionnaire. The overwhelmingly large majority of responses were strongly in support of the work of the school. A very small minority of parents and carers expressed particular concerns. Inspectors followed up these concerns thoroughly and weighed all views carefully in reaching their overall judgements.

## 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, Chorley 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 64 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	44	69	19	30	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	49	77	13	20	2	3	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	38	59	25	39	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	38	59	26	41	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	42	66	22	34	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	37	58	25	39	2	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	45	70	16	25	3	5	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)	34	53	26	41	3	5	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	39	61	23	36	1	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	29	45	26	41	3	5	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	31	48	29	45	3	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	33	52	27	42	2	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	46	72	15	23	1	2	0	0

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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 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 2010/11 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.**



21 May 2011.

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Chorley, Chorley, PR7 2RJ**

Thank you for making us so welcome when we inspected your school recently. We were very impressed with the good relationships you have with each other, and with your teachers. You obviously get on very well together. We also noticed your very good attitudes to learning in lessons, where you are all so keen to get on with your work.

We found that St Mary's is a good school that provides you with a good education. Your headteacher and all the other adults in the school have worked really hard to make sure this happens. You are taught well, learn a great deal about lots of different and interesting things, and make good academic and personal progress over your time in the school.

However, there are some things which the school could do even better. So I have asked your teachers to do the following to help you learn more quickly.

- Increase the time available in lessons for you to learn new things, by speeding up the start of lessons and by reducing the time spent explaining what you are going to do.
- Make sure that work set in lessons meets your different learning needs closely, with nothing that is either too easy or too hard, nor with the same work set for all of you.

You have a part to play in helping the school to get even better. Please let your teachers know, but very politely of course, if you are finding the work they set a bit too easy or a bit too hard.

Please continue to be the well-mannered and friendly young people you already are. I wish you all good luck for the future.

Yours sincerely

Terry McDermott

Lead inspector

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