

St Mary's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125710
Local Authority	Warwickshire
Inspection number	359925
Inspection dates	20–21 June 2011
Reporting inspector	Georgina Beasley

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	228
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sarah Coyne
Headteacher	Mary Johnson
Date of previous school inspection	14 November 2007
School address	Pool Road Studley B80 7QU
Telephone number	01527 852140
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Email address	admin3507@we-learn.com

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Inspectors observed eighteen lessons and eight teachers were seen. They spent 15 hours looking at learning. Inspectors held meetings with groups of pupils, staff and representatives of the governing body. They observed the school's work, and looked at pupils' work in a range of subjects, safeguarding procedures, assessment information, improvement plans and monitoring reports. Inspectors analysed 187 questionnaires from parents and carers, 93 from pupils and 19 from staff.

Information about the school

St Marys Catholic Primary is an average-sized school. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The remaining pupils are from a number of minority ethnic backgrounds. A below-average proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average although an average proportion has a statement of special educational needs. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. Children start in the Reception class in the September following their fourth birthday.

The school has numerous awards including Eco schools and Healthy Schools status, an International Schools Award for its work with schools in Germany, Finland, Spain, Israel and South Africa, the Warwickshire International Primary School of the Year award, and an award for its work with gifted and talented pupils. On site is a privately run before- and after-school club that operates every day.

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	1
Achievement	1
Teaching	1
Leadership and management	1
Behaviour and safety	1
Does the school adequately promote the pupils' well-being?	Yes
Does the school adequately promote community cohesion?	Yes
Does the school provide value for money?	Yes

Key findings

St Mary's ethos summarised by, 'learn to love, love to learn', permeates the life of the school. Pupils thrive in the school's nurturing environment. They quickly learn to reflect deeply on their own learning and on their personal contribution to not only their own families, but also to the school, and wider communities. Pupils feel safe in school because they know any concerns are listened to. They know and understand the guidance for reporting bullying and say that the, 'Think first and then tell a teacher or another adult' works. Consequently, incidents of bullying are very rare.

Pupils come to school wanting to learn. They know how to achieve this and reflect carefully on what they need to do next to improve. Interesting and well-planned curricular experiences promote their learning and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development extremely well. Their excellent behaviour and high attendance make very positive contributions to learning in lessons. Teachers are able to concentrate on ensuring every pupil, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, makes at least good and often excellent progress. The constant drive to improve pupils' already outstanding achievement is evident in lessons. Teaching is consistently good and much is excellent.

Led by a highly effective and passionate headteacher, the school is relentless in its drive to constantly improve its work. The governing body and staff work closely together to plan improvements and then to check regularly to ensure these are working. As a result, the school puts focused support into place very quickly when it notices that pupils' progress slows. Interventions have helped pupils catch up and accelerate progress in reading and writing but have been less successful in mathematics for a very small number of pupils. In addition, interventions do not always include measures against which to evaluate success.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Assess pupils' achievement in mathematics more regularly so that if it dips, support is put into place quickly.
- Include targets when support is given so that the school can measure that it is making the expected improvements to pupils' learning and progress.

Main report

Children's attainment when they start school in the Reception class is within the expected band for their age. They make consistently good progress in all areas of learning to exceed expected levels by the end of the Reception year. Children make a strong start to reading. They regularly share books with each other and adults and talk about their reading knowledge. Group activities target particular skills well and effectively teach specific strategies for working out new words. The excellent focus on reading continues throughout the school and ensures attainment at age six years is above expectations and is high by the end of Year 6.

Learning and progress are excellent across the school because teaching is rarely less than good and much is excellent. In the excellent lessons observed, teachers always asked follow-up questions that delved deeper into pupils' responses to assess their thinking and deepen their understanding. Pupils were encouraged to think about and give reasons why they had reached a particular conclusion. Examples seen include: considering the quality of a newspaper report and improvements pupils would make; working out how to locate ships in a game of Battleships; identifying the suspect in a murder mystery; and talking about what is happening and what may happen next in a story during reading lessons.

Pupils get on quickly with the planned tasks, because their behaviour is excellent and they are interested in what they are learning and doing. On occasion, teachers spend too much time explaining tasks or checking pupils' understanding as a whole class, especially in mathematics lessons, which reduces the amount of time available for independent learning and for pupils to show off and reach their potential. This is especially so for pupils working at average levels.

Teachers check that pupils are making enough progress at every opportunity and formally with the headteacher and deputy headteacher at least once a term. Pupils' attainment has been sustained at its above average level at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Any dips in progress are identified and pupils targeted with extra attention in class or through interventions such as reading recovery, better reading partnerships, or working in small groups in mathematics. Most pupils catch up and accelerate their progress as a result, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. While there is no difference in Years 1 to 5, the achievement of a small number of pupils in mathematics is not as high as their achievement in reading and writing in Year 6. Improvement strategies that have been implemented have not had

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time to make the same high quality impact as in younger year groups. The school checks the effectiveness of interventions closely, although the measures for success sometimes focus on actions taken rather than on planned improvements in pupils' achievement.

Ensuring pupils' wellbeing is at the heart of the school and it does this with great success. All but a very few parents and carers who returned a questionnaire feel their child is safe in school and consider behaviour to be good; pupils agree. A small proportion of parents and carers feel bullying is not always dealt with quickly and effectively. Pupils say that when the very rare incidents of bullying occur, they are dealt with quickly and effectively by an adult. Pupils understand that sometimes accidents happen and that this is, 'okay as long as you say sorry.' Pupils' respectful attitudes and ability to forgive others and say sorry for their actions reflect their excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils' empathetic attitude is reflected in poems and stories in English. Regular opportunities exist for pupils to sit quietly and to think about the part that they play in the world family, whether this is in the prayer garden or during assemblies and class discussions.

The relentless drive for the constant improvement in pupils' achievement and personal accomplishments permeates the whole school. The headteacher inspires everyone to embrace the school's vision. She has created a school team of staff, pupils, parents and members of the governing body who reflect deeply on their own contribution and performance. As a result, everyone strives for personal improvement alongside that of the school. Everyone is involved in monitoring and evaluating the quality of what the school provides and in ensuring this is as good as it can be. The governing body plays an active role in the school's work. Procedures for ensuring pupils' safety are robust. Everyone who visits the school undergoes a detailed interview which checks their identity. The school ensures visitors understand and follow the school's safeguarding procedures.

The school makes sure every pupil receives an exciting and meaningful curriculum and high quality teaching. Good opportunities exist to practise skills in a varied range of subjects and topics. Achievement in all subjects is high. The youngest children have good opportunities to learn inside and outdoors. Discussions with adults about their learning help them develop new skills and to think creatively and imaginatively. As a result, they develop a love of learning early. Everyone who wishes to take part in activities is enabled to do so.

Around 70% of pupils in Years 3 to 6 are learning to play a musical instrument and members of the school orchestra are accomplished players. Pupils enjoy performing at various concerts and events during the year. Social cohesion weeks celebrate the school's ethnic diversity and build extremely strong links with pupils in schools in Britain and the wider world. Pupils' high quality learning is reflected in an International Schools Award and its Warwickshire International Primary School of the Year status. Gifted and talented pupils have good opportunities to try out new learning such as Latin taster courses, chess and additional lessons. Every Year 6 pupil is able to speak Spanish to a good level and with good diction. Pupils enjoy

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greatly the numerous opportunities to play sport, including at the nearby sports hall.

The school has outstanding capacity to improve. Leadership at all levels is focused on driving up achievement. Since the previous inspection, the school has improved pupils' academic achievement and strengthened further their personal development. Teachers' excellent use of assessment information ensures the right amount of challenge and support to accelerate pupils' progress. Pupils across the school talk knowledgeably about their learning because they have frequent opportunities to plan and assess their own and each other's work. This was an area the previous inspection report identified as needing improvement. Teachers' comments on pupils' work give clear guidance to pupils on what they have achieved and how to improve. Pupils know that they have to acknowledge the comments, although they do not always make the actual improvements pointed out. Constant review of individual targets in reading, writing and mathematics and how to achieve them give pupils an in-depth knowledge and understanding of their own learning. From the youngest to the eldest, pupils are able to point out precisely how much they have achieved during the year.

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 12 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 187 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 228 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
Q1 My child is happy at school	128	68	57	30	2	1	0	0
Q2 My child feels safe at school	144	77	40	21	3	2	0	0
Q3 The school helps my child to achieve as well as they can	114	61	65	35	5	3	0	0
Q4 The school meets my child’s particular needs	105	56	69	37	6	3	0	0
Q5 The school ensures my child is well looked after	133	71	48	26	5	3	0	0
Q6 Teaching at this school is good	120	64	61	33	3	2	0	0
Q7 There is a good standard of behaviour at this school	132	71	51	27	2	1	0	0
Q8 Lessons are not disrupted by bad behaviour	93	50	75	40	8	4	0	0
Q9 The school deals with any cases of bullying well	87	47	70	37	12	6	3	2
Q10 The school helps me to support my child’s learning	106	57	72	39	7	4	0	0
Q11 The school responds to my concerns and keeps me well informed	105	56	68	36	11	6	2	1
Q12 The school is well led and managed	129	69	54	29	2	1	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).

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"> ■ The achievement of all pupils. ■ Behaviour and safety. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The effectiveness of leadership and management. <p>and taking into consideration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ how well the school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
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 June 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Studley, B80 7QU

Thank you for making us feel so welcome when we visited your school recently. Thank you to those of you who returned a questionnaire and took the time to tell us so much about your school.

St Mary's is an outstanding school. This means that everything in your school is at least good and most things are excellent. Your headteacher and teachers help you to achieve extremely well in your personal development and in your learning. Your behaviour is excellent. You are considerate and respectful of others' feelings and know when to tell a teacher or another adult if you have a concern. Bullying is very rare but you are confident that the school will sort things out quickly if it happens. Teachers make sure lessons are interesting and help you make excellent progress. You have great opportunity to take part in a varied range of activities and to learn new things such as learning to play a musical instrument, taking part in sporting events and trying out Latin. I wish I could speak Spanish as well as you do. The work you do with schools in this country and around the world is excellent.

We have asked the school to assess your progress in mathematics more regularly, so that if your achievement slips you are given support more quickly. We have asked the school to monitor that the extra support you receive helps you to make faster progress. You can help by continuing to check your work carefully and by telling your teacher if you need them to explain some of the work in more detail.

Thank you again for your warm welcome. We wish you and the school well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Georgina Beasley
Lead inspector

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