

# St Mary and St Benedict Catholic Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	133556
<b>Local Authority</b>	Coventry
<b>Inspection number</b>	360530
<b>Inspection dates</b>	27–28 June 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Mike Thompson

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>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	332
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Elizabeth Hancock
<b>Headteacher</b>	Pauline MacDonald
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	28 January 2008
<b>School address</b>	Leigh Street Coventry CV1 5HG
<b>Telephone number</b>	02476 229486
<b>Fax number</b>	02476 632241
<b>Email address</b>	admin@stmary-stben.coventry.sch.uk

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors observed 13 teachers and visited 19 lessons including observations with a specific focus on the support provided for pupils whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable. The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, members of staff, representatives of the governing body, and pupils. They also held informal discussions with a small number of parents and carers. They looked at a range of information, including data showing the progress made by pupils and samples of pupils' work. Inspectors analysed questionnaires returned by 120 parents and carers, 50 pupils in Key Stage 2 and 16 members of staff.

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

- How successful has the school been in continuing to raise standards, particularly in mathematics?
- How effective is planning within mixed-age classes in producing well-pitched, challenging tasks for all pupils and ensuring that pupils use information and communication technology (ICT) as an integral part of their day-to-day learning?
- How skilled are leaders at all levels in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school, and what is their impact on pupils' achievement?

## Information about the school

This inner-city primary school is larger than average. The area it serves is one of great cultural diversity. Thirty-three different languages are spoken at home by pupils at the school. Almost 40% of pupils have English as an additional language, and about half of these are in the early stages of learning to communicate in English. Pupils from White British and Black African backgrounds are the two largest ethnic groups, each comprising about one third of the number on roll. About 40% of the pupils are eligible for free school meals. This proportion is more than twice the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average. Most of these pupils have general learning difficulties. Provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage comprises a Nursery, which children attend on a part-time basis in either the morning or afternoon, and two teaching groups in the Reception year.

The school has Healthy School status, the Basic Skills award, and accreditation as a foundation level International School.

In term-time, the school provides child care, both before and after the school day, for children aged from 3 to 11 and, within the Nursery during school hours, for 3 year-olds who attend the Nursery part-time.

**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 Mary and St Benedict Catholic Primary School provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. Improvements in provision over the past few years have had a positive impact on pupils' attainment and progress, but inconsistencies in the quality of teaching mean that pupils make satisfactory rather than good progress overall. The school has a number of strengths. These relate mainly to the care, guidance and support that the school provides and to its effective arrangements for promoting pupils' personal development and well-being. Parents and carers greatly appreciate the welcoming, secure and supportive environment provided for their children. Pupils say they are well cared for and feel safe. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep safe and healthy. They show great respect for one another and their behaviour is outstanding.

Improvements to provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage in recent years are producing beneficial results. Children make satisfactory progress in the Nursery and rapid progress in the Reception year, where teaching is consistently stimulating and is well matched to individual learning needs.

In Key Stages 1 and 2, almost all pupils make progress at the nationally expected rate in English and mathematics, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and pupils with English as an additional language. Attainment is improving in Key Stage 1, as pupils now move from Reception with skills appropriate to their age, but the impact of this is yet to reach Year 2, where attainment is currently below average. Standards are steadily rising at the end of Year 6, although attainment remains within the 'broadly average' band when pupils transfer to the next stage of their education.

Teaching is satisfactory. There is some good teaching, and inspectors observed good features in all lessons. Teachers relate well to their pupils and explain tasks clearly but their expectations of what pupils can achieve are not always high enough. In instances when all pupils have the same task, teachers miss opportunities to ensure good levels of individual challenge and do not give pupils precise enough criteria, matched to their abilities, for them to judge their success. Sometimes teachers direct pupils' work too closely. For example, they use photo-copied worksheets, rather than expecting pupils to record their work independently. This limits opportunities for them to develop independence as learners and does little to improve pupils' skills as writers.

The curriculum is well-organised and provides a broad range of experiences for pupils, enriched well by the use of ICT, visits to places of educational interest and visitors to the school. Particularly noteworthy is the recently introduced focus on exploring the values that are important in everyday life. The success of this initiative is seen in the pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

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The impact of leadership on pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Leaders are effective in focusing the school's efforts on priorities, but the monitoring of the school's effectiveness lacks rigour. Records of lesson observations focus too much on provision rather than the impact of teaching on pupils' learning. The school's targets for improvement sometimes lack precision, which means that success in achieving them cannot be measured objectively. The governing body knows the strengths and weaknesses of the school and provides satisfactory challenge. The procedures for evaluating the school's effectiveness are sound and, together with the impact of actions taken to accelerate pupils' achievement, such as the use of an additional teacher in order to increase the number of teaching groups in mathematics in Years 5 and 6, demonstrate a satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement.

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?**

- In order to accelerate pupils' progress and raise attainment, improve the quality of teaching and learning, so that the large majority is good or better, by ensuring that teachers:
  - have consistently high expectations of what their pupils can achieve
  - make increased use of success criteria to set specific, measurable targets carefully matched to the abilities of all pupils
  - place a greater emphasis on developing pupils' skills as independent learners.
  - Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
    - there is greater rigour in the monitoring of teaching and learning, with written evaluations focusing clearly on the impact of teaching on learning
    - the criteria set out for monitoring progress in achieving targets for improvement are always specific and measurable.

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

Attainment is steadily improving in both key stages. Data provided by the school show satisfactory, although uneven, rates of pupils' progress across subjects and year groups. This is reflected in the lessons observed. For example, in a science lesson for pupils in Years 5 and 6, the challenge of making toothpaste resulted in high levels of interest and great enjoyment but did not place enough emphasis on developing scientific method. Notwithstanding this example, in most instances, pupils in Years 5 and 6 make good gains in learning. The school places a strong emphasis on developing pupils' basic skills, for example through the regular teaching of the relationship between written letters and spoken sounds (phonics) in the Year 1 and 2 classes. The positive impact of this was seen in a Year 2 lesson, where pupils took turns to read aloud. In most cases, they read confidently and showed secure skills in linking sounds to build words. The teacher played an important part in developing learning by ensuring that pupils were corrected whenever they gave grammatically incorrect responses to questions. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress, as do those who speak English as an additional language. Skilled learning support assistants play an important role in

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supporting these pupils, for example, by explaining unfamiliar words so they know precisely what they have to do.

All of the parents and carers who returned the inspection questionnaires felt that their children enjoy school. This view is reflected in improved rates of attendance, which are now above the national average for primary schools. Pupils' enthusiasm for sporting activities demonstrates their clear understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle, acknowledged by Healthy School status. Pupils participate regularly in parish activities. They value their school community and willingly take on responsibility, for instance as members of the school council. The impact of the 'values education' approach recently adopted by the school is evident in the demeanour of the pupils, for whom qualities of respect, honesty and consideration for others are an everyday feature of school life. Pupils' spiritual awareness, as seen in their understanding of their own development and appreciation of that of others, is outstanding. Pupils show great empathy for the wide range of cultural traditions celebrated within the school. Pupils' developing understanding of the wider world is recognised by the foundation level of the International School award.

*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>	3
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>1</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>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<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?

Teachers are good at using questions to help gauge pupils' understanding and reshape their explanations if needed. However, lessons lose pace and direction when teachers talk for too long or do not ensure that the pupils are clear about precisely what skills they need

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to display when tackling their work. In some instances, teachers manage their time well to ensure that learning is consolidated at the end of lessons. For example, an effective review of learning at the end of a Year 5 and 6 lesson on letter writing resulted from pupils' thoughtful evaluations of each other's work. When lessons over-run, there is little or no time for review and reinforcement of learning. Teachers make satisfactory use of assessment to support pupils' learning, but work is in progress to embed its use more securely and to address the inconsistencies in the levels of challenge provided for pupils.

The planning of cross-curricular topics, including the use of ICT as an integral part of day-to-day learning, contributes strongly to pupils' enjoyment. A good variety of activities enriches the curriculum and promotes particularly good outcomes in pupils' personal, social and cultural development. For example, during the inspection, pupils in one of the Year 5 and 6 classes visited Compton Verney art gallery to enhance their enjoyment and broaden their experience. The school modifies its curriculum effectively in order to better meet the needs of different pupil groups. In Years 5 and 6, for example, splitting the 'fast track' class for lessons in mathematics provides suitable challenge for more-able pupils. A group of eight such pupils achieved well because of the individual attention available during their challenge to solve problems involving whole numbers and decimals. The work provided for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is suitably planned and tailored satisfactorily to individual needs. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are fully involved and ensuring their inclusion in all activities is a high priority. To this end, a French speaker provides regular support for pupils of Black African heritage.

The school is a caring community in which the individual needs of every pupil are very well understood. Good quality support is given to those whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable. There are well-established and effective arrangements to induct pupils into school and ensure a smooth transition to the secondary phase of education. Children are well looked after in the school's child care provision. Staff are suitably qualified and systems for ensuring good communication with parents are straightforward. There are well established arrangements to adjust staffing levels at very short notice in response to fluctuations in the number of children requiring care. The welfare and well-being of children is given the highest priority.

*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 positive views expressed by parents and carers, pupils and staff indicate that they have confidence in the leadership. The direction provided in embedding ambition and driving improvement is satisfactory; the targets set for raising achievement are adequately

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challenging, and standards are gradually rising. There are suitable plans in place to improve on areas of weakness and eliminate inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. Governance is satisfactory. The governing body takes a keen interest in the work of the school, but some policies are overdue for review.

Parents' and carers' overwhelmingly positive views about their children's experiences reflect their appreciation that this is an inclusive school in which discrimination has no place. It gives their children a sense of belonging and equality of opportunity. The school uses data about pupils' performance well to keep a check on the attainment of different groups of pupils, such as those who speak English as an additional language. Safeguarding procedures have a high profile, meet requirements, and are rigorously applied through well-developed systems for quality assurance and risk assessment. A wide range of partnerships, including strong links with local schools, helps enrich pupils' experiences. Partnerships with professional agencies, such as the local authority's speech-and-language service and social care, provide valuable support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and for those who may be vulnerable. The school's parish links contribute strongly to the effective promotion of community cohesion. It regularly takes opportunities to broaden pupils' horizons in appreciating the rich diversity of cultural heritage within its community.

*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>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

When children join the Nursery class their skills and understanding are generally below the levels normally expected for three-year-olds, with particular weakness in communication, language and literacy. By the time they leave Reception the majority attain the expected learning goals, and in recent years an increasing number of children are exceeding the goals expected. Milestones in children's development are carefully recorded, although



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some of the assessments are too descriptive and lack evaluative text. In both Nursery and Reception, adults place a high priority on ensuring the well-being of the children.

Children make particularly good progress in developing personal and social skills. They quickly adapt to routines, share resources amicably, respect others and behave well. In the Reception year, adults have an exceptionally good understanding of how young children learn and provide exciting themed activities that capture children's imaginations. For example, 'Pirate Shortfinger's writing challenge' resulted in some examples of writing at a high standard for children of this age. Children made good use of ICT as a day-to-day tool for learning, and greatly enjoyed programming the movements of an electronic toy around a grid to reach the pirate's treasure. Good opportunities to develop children's creativity and skills in communication were provided through role play as pirates. All areas of learning are covered well and there is a good balance between opportunities for children to learn through play and direct teaching, both indoors and out. All adults are good at developing children's learning through conversation, but on some occasions they miss opportunities to correct immature speech patterns or grammatically incorrect responses. This is particularly important as a number of the children are in the early stages of learning to communicate in English. Leadership provides clear direction and recognises the need for improvement in some aspects of Nursery provision.

*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

In the questionnaires returned, most parents and carers were positive in their views of the school. Inspection findings support most of the positive views expressed by parents and carers, particularly regarding the care and welfare of pupils. However, inspection evidence indicates that teaching and the progress made by pupils are satisfactory rather than good.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Mary and St Benedict 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 120 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 332 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	92	77	28	23	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	84	70	34	28	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	86	72	30	25	2	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	70	58	44	37	2	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	73	61	41	34	3	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	75	63	41	34	3	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	65	54	51	43	2	2	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)	67	56	48	40	2	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	57	48	55	46	4	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	59	49	48	40	5	4	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	48	40	53	44	6	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	71	59	45	38	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	78	65	40	33	1	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](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.**



29 June 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of St Mary and St Benedict Catholic Primary School, Coventry, CV1 5HG**

I would like to thank all of you for being so welcoming and helpful to your inspectors when we visited your school. I think that your school gives you a satisfactory education. This means that there are a lot of things that your school is doing right and some things that need to be improved. I know that all the adults who help to run your school want it to be a good school. For this to happen, you need to make better progress in your work.

Here are some of the best things about your school.

Your behaviour is outstanding.

You are developing excellent skills as future citizens.

You told inspectors that you feel safe because the staff take good care of you.

You know a lot about how to stay healthy.

Your attendance has improved and is now good. Well done! This is important.

To help you to make better progress, I want your school to do these things.

I have asked your teachers to make sure that the work they give you always makes you think hard, and that you do more thinking for yourself instead of relying on them to tell you what to do. I am sure that you are ready for these challenges! I have also asked your teachers to give you very clear targets to achieve in lessons.

I have asked your school managers to check more carefully on how well you learn and to make sure that their plan to improve your school has clearer targets.

I would like you all to play your part in helping the school to improve. The best way for you to do this is to always pay careful attention to what your teachers ask you to do and try your best to work on your own when your teachers ask you to do this.

Yours sincerely

Mike Thompson

Lead inspector

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