

St Mary Immaculate Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125717
Local Authority	Warwickshire
Inspection number	359928
Inspection dates	5–6 July 2011
Reporting inspector	David Shears

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	118
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Julia FitzSimons
Headteacher	Robert Gargan
Date of previous school inspection	5 November 2007
School address	Wathen Road Warwick CV34 5BG
Telephone number	01926 493959
Fax number	01926 410592
Email address	admin3545@we-learn.com

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St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited seven lessons taught by five different teachers, and held meetings with representative members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at policies, planning documentation, assessment data and pupils' work. They analysed the questionnaires returned by 42 parents and carers, 15 members of staff and 51 pupils.

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

- Inspectors evaluated the quality of teaching and learning and whether it consistently helps all pupils, including the more able, to make good progress.
- They considered the development of core skills within the curriculum, particularly in literacy.
- Inspectors assessed the effectiveness of the leaders and managers in bringing about improvements to ensure better progress.
- They explored the quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage, especially for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the more able.

Information about the school

St Mary Immaculate is a smaller-than-average-sized primary school. The very large majority of pupils are of White British origin, with a few from an Asian background. The number of pupils who start or leave the school during the year is above average. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average; their needs are mainly either moderate learning difficulties or behavioural, social and emotional difficulties. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above average, although few are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. There is a breakfast club for pupils at the school, which is run by the governing body. The Early Years Foundation Stage is made up of the pre-school class, known as 'Little Angels' and one Reception class. The school has achieved Healthy School Status.

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 Immaculate is a satisfactory school. This is because the progress that pupils make is satisfactory, although there are clear signs of improvement this year, particularly in writing. The school has identified writing as an area for development and has introduced a number of initiatives to tackle this, resulting in pupils making better progress and, in some year groups, good progress. The development of writing skills has been established in the Early Years Foundation Stage, which has also been a focus for the school. Consequently, the effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage has improved and is now good. Through accurate self-evaluation the school demonstrates a satisfactory capacity to improve further.

The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection, with more lessons that are judged to be good. Teachers plan engaging activities that are often practical so that pupils can learn through experiences. The enrichment of the curriculum is developing well, with visits out and special visitors to the school to stimulate pupils' thinking and imagination. However, although pupils have some opportunities to practise basic skills, such as writing, in other subjects, these are not carefully planned into the wider curriculum and consequently do not have enough impact on the progress pupils make.

In lessons, pupils do not always know what they need to do to be successful in their learning. Teaching assistants are deployed well, but in some lessons give pupils too much support, rather than enabling them to learn for themselves through careful questioning. Marking is completed and teachers are quick to praise pupils in their work. However, pupils are not consistently given enough guidance in knowing the next steps in their learning.

The care of pupils is a significant strength of the school. Pupils are treated as individuals and good quality support given to those for whom circumstances may make them vulnerable. This results in pupils feeling safe and secure within a caring environment that is based on Christian values. This benefits other good aspects of the school, such as their adoption of healthy lifestyles and their good behaviour.

Leaders and managers give good pastoral support to the significant number of pupils who arrive at different points during the school year, enabling them to settle well. However, assessments to ascertain the academic level of individuals are not carried out rapidly enough to ensure that any gaps in their learning are addressed promptly so that they can begin to make good progress. Well-organised records are kept of the progress of all pupils, although these are not formally reviewed frequently enough to identify any pupils who may be at risk of underachievement and consequently too many make satisfactory rather than good progress.

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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?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning so that pupils make consistently good progress through the school, and thereby raise attainment by ensuring that:
 - pupils know what they need to do to be successful in their learning in every lesson
 - teaching assistants are enabled to help pupils engage in their own learning through targeted questioning
 - marking consistently shares with the pupils their next steps in learning.
- Improve the effectiveness of the curriculum by ensuring that opportunities for pupils to practise their basic skills are carefully planned so that their learning is consolidated and moved on.
- Improve the effectiveness of leaders and managers by ensuring that:
 - pupils that arrive during the school year are quickly assessed so that they receive work that matches their needs, enabling them to make good progress
 - regular meetings with staff review the progress of all pupils to identify any at risk of underachievement, giving them appropriate support and challenge that is carefully checked for its effectiveness.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Attainment on entry to the school varies between year groups, some arriving with skills that are below those that are expected nationally and others that are more in line with expectations. However, there is a consistent relative weakness in their communication, language and literacy skills. They make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage so that they enter Year 1 with attainment that is broadly average in all areas. In Years 1 to 6 they make satisfactory progress overall, although this is improving and is now good in some year groups this year. Consequently, pupils leave with attainment that is broadly average in English and mathematics. All groups of pupils make satisfactory progress, including pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and more-able pupils. Due to the good support they receive, those who speak English as an additional language make good progress. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress because they receive satisfactory support in class. While activities are adapted to meet their needs, they are not always challenged enough to extend their learning so that it is good.

Where teaching is good, pupils of all abilities receive work that is tailored to their needs. For example, in one lesson seen, where pupils were learning about adjectives, more-able pupils were learning to use a thesaurus to find and use more interesting adjectives. Similarly, in another lesson about writing a persuasive letter, less-able pupils were given a template to help them organise their writing. Pupils enjoy their lessons. They behave well in school and on the playground and, where a few pupils find this a challenge, adults manage it well.

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Pupils have a good understanding of what it means to have a healthy lifestyle, including eating sensibly and taking exercise. They participate enthusiastically in a range of physical activities both in school and during extra-curricular clubs. As a result, the school has achieved Healthy School Status. They make a good contribution to the school through being given responsibilities and making their views known through the school council, such as the replacement of toilets. Pupils have also made a difference to the wider community. For example, pupils have participated in a litter-pick in the park and taken part in celebrations held in the local parish church. Attendance is average and strategies are in place to monitor this carefully. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good overall. In particular, their spiritual development is a key aspect of the school's provision. While their social and moral development is promoted well, they have fewer opportunities to experience other cultures other than those in the school.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	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
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ 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?

Lessons are characterised by good relationships between staff and pupils, resulting in pupils who have good attitudes towards their learning. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and use information and communication technology, such as interactive whiteboards, well to enhance teaching. Pupils are consistently told what they are going to be learning, although not how they will know when they have been successful in their work. Assessments are used to ensure that the work is generally well-matched to the

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ability of pupils. In good lessons there are often practical activities that enthuse pupils and engage them well in their learning.

Pupils enjoy the wider curriculum because of its practical nature. For example, there are particular strengths in the teaching of art skills and all pupils in Years 3 to 6 have the opportunity to learn Spanish. A number of extra-curricular activities help to extend pupils' learning further. Overarching the curriculum is the effective work done through personal, social and health education, which is linked with religious education. However, opportunities are missed to channel pupils' interest into planned practising of their core skills in other subjects.

Pupils are well cared for in a school that meets their personal needs well. In particular, pupils for whom circumstances may make them vulnerable, together with their families, are well supported, enabling them to make good progress in their behavioural, social and emotional development so that they are able to access learning more readily and make at least satisfactory progress. Arrangements for the transition into and out of the school are comprehensive. Pupils attending the breakfast club enjoy the experience, which provides a calm and purposeful start to the school day.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Senior leaders, including the governing body, have a good understanding of the school's strengths and have correctly identified areas for development. These are included in the school's improvement plan. In particular, those related to the Early Years Foundation Stage and to writing across the school have been effective in increasing the progress of pupils in these areas. The governing body's effectiveness is satisfactory. It is well informed, both through reports from the headteacher and visits to the school. There is a good focus on the progress of groups, but checks on the progress of all pupils as individuals are less rigorous. The school has a good relationship with parents and carers, who are very supportive. There are positive links with other agencies that give advice to the school such as the learning and behaviour support team. While the school works well to minimise any discrimination and promote equal opportunities, pupils who speak English as an additional language make better progress than other groups. Nevertheless, the safeguarding of all pupils is a clear priority in ensuring that pupils are safe both in school and out on trips as well as teaching pupils how to stay safe. In particular, risk assessments are of good quality.

There is a family atmosphere that permeates the school, making it a community of people who enjoy working and playing together. Pupils of different ages and cultures get on well

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and this extends into the local community such as donating their harvest gifts to the local Salvation Army for distribution to the poor. The school has strong links internationally, such as partnering with a school in Sierra Leone, where pupils regularly write and receive letters. There is much support for a number of charities, ranging from Father Hudson's society to Comic Relief. Pupils' experience of other cultures within the United Kingdom is not as strong.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children settle well into the Early Years Foundation Stage because there are good procedures for induction, including home visits. Staff warmly welcome parents and carers to the school and encourage them to talk through any problems or worries they may have. Both the pre-school and the Reception classrooms are bright and interesting, reflecting the children's work, particularly in creative development.

Although children make good progress overall, it is stronger in Reception than in the pre-school. Nonetheless, there has been recent rapid improvement in the pre-school with the appointment of new staff and support for developments in writing. Teachers plan work that covers all areas of learning and they record ongoing assessments in well-presented learning journals. While staff complete assessments on a termly basis, they do not currently annotate the learning journals when a child has attained a particular level. The provision for outdoor learning has improved and children have opportunities to engage in a wide variety of activities that cover all six areas of learning. Staff have focused effectively on the communication, language and literacy skills of children, enabling them to make particularly good progress in this area. They identify children with special educational needs and/or disabilities early and give them appropriate support. More-able

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children also make good progress from their starting points. The care of all children is good, as is the leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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

The overwhelming majority of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire were positive in their views about the school. All agreed that their children enjoyed school and had their needs met. Almost all agreed that their children make enough progress because of the good teaching, that they were kept safe and that behaviour is managed well. A few parents and carers were concerned about receiving enough support to help their children learn. Inspectors found that while there are meetings to support parents and carers with homework, there are insufficient opportunities for parents and carers to find out about the curriculum.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Mary Immaculate 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 42 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 118 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	32	76	10	24	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	29	69	12	29	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	25	60	15	36	2	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	30	71	11	26	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	31	74	10	24	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	28	67	8	19	4	10	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	27	64	12	29	2	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)	28	67	10	24	1	2	1	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	26	62	16	38	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	29	69	12	29	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	22	52	16	38	3	7	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	27	64	13	31	0	0	2	5
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	29	69	12	29	0	0	1	2

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 school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



7 July 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Mary Immaculate Catholic Primary School, Warwick, CV34 5BG

Thank you for the welcome that we received when we visited your school recently. It was lovely to meet you all and find out about your school.

You told us that you feel safe in school because there are lots of teachers to help you. We were impressed with your own knowledge of how to keep safe, not just in school but at other times too. You also have a good understanding of how to keep healthy by eating sensibly and taking exercise.

We found that you go to a school that gives you a satisfactory education, which means that some things are good but others can be improved. We found that the younger children are making a good start and that your school cares well for you all. We found that most of you make satisfactory progress in your learning, although we can see that it is improving, particularly in writing.

We have asked your teachers to make sure that you all know how to be successful in your learning in every lesson. We have also asked your teachers to let you know what you need to do next to improve, and for the teaching assistants to challenge you in your learning as well as supporting you.

We have also asked that you have more planned opportunities to practise your core skills in other subjects.

Finally, we have asked the senior leaders to make sure that when you are new they get you started quickly on work that is just right for you, and check more often how well all of you are doing to make sure that you are making good progress. All of you can help by telling your teachers if you are finding the work too easy or too hard.

Thank you again for looking after us so well. We wish you all the very best in your future lives.

Yours sincerely

David Shears

Lead inspector

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