

# St Mary's and St Benedict's Roman Catholic Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	119704
<b>Local Authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	358609
<b>Inspection dates</b>	14–15 July 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Nigel Cromey-Hawke

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>	260
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Richard Vallely
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Anne Hardisty
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	5 June 2008
<b>School address</b>	Brownedge Lane Bamber Bridge, Preston Lancashire PR5 6TA
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 10 lessons, observing eight staff and eight classes. They also held meetings with members of the governing body, staff, pupils, and parents and carers. They observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation, including development planning, pupils' work, safeguarding arrangements, self-evaluation records, policies and performance data. Questionnaires from 83 parents and carers, 126 pupils and 15 staff were scrutinised.

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

- What the school is doing to raise attainment and achievement across the school.
- How far teaching is challenging for all pupils.
- How well informed, cohesive and focused staff are in driving improvement forward, given recent changes in staffing.

## Information about the school

Most pupils in this larger than average primary school are White British. A very few speak English as an additional language. The number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for a free school meal is above average. The proportion of pupils joining and leaving the school part way through their education is slightly above average. The school has Healthy School status, the Activemark, the financial management standard and Basic Skills Quality Mark. Pupils are taught in mixed-age classes throughout the school.

There have been significant changes in staffing over the last two years, as well as the current headteacher taking up post in September 2009 and the deputy headteacher in September 2010. There was a major programme of building and refurbishment last year. An independently managed pre-and after-school facility on the school site is subject to a separate inspection and report.

**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

This is a satisfactory school. The good safeguarding, care and support pupils and their families receive make a considerable difference to their lives. Through the good programme of personal and social education pupils also have an excellent sense of what it means to lead a healthy lifestyle and many aspects of their personal development are outstanding as a result. The very large majority of parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire are highly supportive of the school's work.

Children enter the Reception class with basic skills that vary each year but are, overall, broadly typical for their age. They make good progress because of the good teaching, welfare provision and leadership and management there. Pupils' progress through the rest of the school is satisfactory. Attainment on leaving the school is average but improving, as new ways of working begin to have an impact. Real gains have been made pupils' attainment in mathematics but writing remains a weakness in some classes. Teaching is satisfactory overall but highly variable in quality. Better lessons feature appropriate pace and challenge but weaker ones lack these features, as well as an appropriate match of activities to pupils' needs. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are underdeveloped in satisfactory lessons and marking is inconsistent across the school. The satisfactory curriculum is being updated to make it more imaginative. It has strengths in the arts, sport and provision for extra-curricular activities.

Many pupils take full advantage of the opportunities provided for them to take on responsibilities within the school and this area is excellent, as is pupils' involvement in the local community. Behaviour is good and attendance above average. Pupils say they enjoy school and feel very safe there because of the good levels of care and support they receive. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Recent challenges facing the school are being overcome and the school is moving forward under the determined leadership of its headteacher, staff and governing body. The school has a well-informed understanding of its strengths and weaknesses but some of its plans, such as the extension of target setting across the school to raise expectations, are not yet fully in place. Some aspects of development planning are not detailed enough to give a clear picture of what needs to be done, which makes the evaluation of the impact of actions taken less secure. As such, the school's capacity for sustained improvement is satisfactory.

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 attainment and achievement by ensuring that the quality of learning and progress is good or better in all lessons, by:

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- - ensuring that there is more consistently good use of assessment data across all classes to more accurately match activities to all pupils' needs
- - developing pupils' speaking and listening skills, so that they are able to learn more effectively from adults and each other in lessons
- - providing more pace and challenge within lessons
- - further improving pupils' writing skills so that they can communicate their learning more effectively
- - extending the good practice in the marking of pupils' work seen in some classes across the rest of the school so that all pupils have a clear idea of the standard they are working at and what they need to do to improve their work.
- Improve leadership and management by:
  - - extending the recently introduced practice of setting individual pupil learning targets across the school so that expectations of both pupils and staff are raised
  - - sharpening development planning so that leaders and managers at all levels have a clearer picture of what needs to be done to bring about improvement and the evaluation of the impact of actions can be more accurate.

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

The school is accurate in its self-evaluation that learning and progress in lessons is satisfactory overall. It varies widely due to differences in the quality of teaching and there is evidence of some underachievement in lower Key Stage 2. In lessons most pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding and learn and practise their skills satisfactorily. They are keen to succeed, mostly apply themselves well in lessons, work at a good pace and enjoy their learning, when provided with appropriate tasks and guidance. Pupils' attainment by the time they leave Year 6 is average but rising in response to a more stable staffing situation. The proportion of pupils gaining the higher grades in national tests in Year 6 has risen this year to above national expectations within mathematics but remains just below average in English. Progress in developing pupils' writing skills across the school has been made but these skills are still underdeveloped in some classes. This limits some pupils' abilities to communicate their learning. However, inspection evidence and school data show that the large majority of pupils make at least satisfactory progress from their starting points, including those who join the school part-way through a year. The progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is good, helped by the extra support they receive.

Pupils say they feel very safe and well looked after in the school. Behaviour is good around the school and often very good in the best lessons. The school places a very high priority upon developing pupils' understanding of healthy living. Pupils also make an outstanding contribution to the daily running of the school through the excellent work of the school council, as trained play leaders and buddies and through the very high-quality daily televised pupil broadcast that alerts everyone to daily events. Attendance is above average. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good but held back from being outstanding by the relative underdevelopment of pupils' understanding of and contact with the wider world. Despite satisfactory basic skills, pupils develop good personal qualities and skills in information and communication technology so that they are well prepared for the next stage in their learning.

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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

*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	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>1</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>	2
<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?

Teaching is satisfactory across the school. There is a small amount that is outstanding but also some that is inadequate. The school has this issue well in hand, however, with additional support and restructured staffing in place for the next school year. In the better lessons good planning ensures that varied activities are provided that meet the needs of pupils, and good pace and challenge from the teacher stimulate their interest. The school has recently introduced several new initiatives, including improved assessment practices to raise the quality of teaching. In the effective lessons the results of this action can be seen in tasks and support being closely focused upon pupils' needs. Whilst the quality of teaching is improving, the new changes are not being adopted consistently across all classes. In some lessons assessment data is not yet used effectively to match activities appropriately to pupils' needs in the mixed-age classes. Speaking and listening skills are not as well established as they could be, with the result that not all pupils learn as effectively as they should from each other or from adults in lessons. The good marking policy is also inconsistent in its operation and so some pupils have weak feedback on the standard of their work and guidance on how to improve it.

The curriculum has been subject to major review recently, with a more extensive range of creative topic approaches being introduced to develop pupils' skills. Weak areas in English and mathematics have been identified and good support has been put in place to target

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them. A good programme for pupils who have been identified as able and talented pupils has been introduced through the schools' effective partnership working with the local high school. This also contributes to the broad range of extra-curricular activities provided by the school. There is a good range of visits and visitors to the school and an extensive programme of personal, social and health education that contributes significantly to pupils' well-being. Much of the curriculum development work is in its early stages and its consistent use across the school and its impact is not yet fully evident.

The care, guidance and support provided by the school are good. This impacts very well upon pupils' personal development and increasingly upon their learning. The staff work hard to overcome the limitations of an old building and the impact of this is seen in the warm, harmonious atmosphere of the school and the very positive relationships between pupils and adults. Transition arrangements for pupils joining and leaving the school, including those who do so mid-term, are good. There is a good programme of family learning, often linked to parents' evenings, with e-safety, reading and mathematics inputs that parents and carers say they have found very useful. The school has good links with the on-site pre- and after-school club and works well with a range of agencies to support the learning of pupils who are deemed to be vulnerable due to their circumstances.

*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>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The headteacher and deputy headteacher have a clear vision for the school and are driving improvement forward with energy and determination. They have largely stabilised staffing, overseen a considerable upgrading of facilities and introduced new ways of working. Their vision is shared by the staff, governing body, and parents and carers, who are especially appreciative of the changes brought about. A programme of support and challenge to improve the quality of teaching and learning has been initiated and is well supported by subject leaders. The school recognises that it still has work to do in raising expectations by extending the effective use of individual pupil learning targets, recently introduced into upper Key Stage 2, across all areas of the school. The school's self-evaluation practices are good, with regular monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning taking place, although some aspects of the school's development planning lack a sharpness of focus.

Procedures to safeguard pupils are good, reflecting the levels of care within the school. There is good practice, especially in the checking and vetting of staff, and in the recording and monitoring of support for vulnerable pupils. The promotion of equal opportunities is satisfactory, reflecting the variability in the quality of teaching, but gaps in pupils'

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performance are being reduced. Discrimination is extremely rare and when encountered is dealt with well. The school engages well with parents and carers, especially through the extensive range of newsletters and booklets that keep them informed about the school's work. The school works closely with its neighbouring schools, often leading them in development activities. Community cohesion is excellent at school and local levels but is good overall because pupils' direct contacts with other cultures and communities are still being developed. The governing body has undergone considerable change in the last year but has a satisfactory understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and is increasingly supporting and challenging its drive for improvement.

*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

Children settle happily into the Reception class and enjoy their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage because of the good care they receive. There is a strong focus upon developing children's social, mathematical and language skills. Children's learning is well recorded and data are used to inform the next steps in their learning. Parents and carers are well informed about their children's progress and teachers have a good understanding of their interests and needs. Children make good progress because of the good, and sometimes outstanding, teaching in an environment that caters well for their needs. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities also make good progress because of the additional support they receive. Teachers plan a good range of activities, with a good balance between those they direct and the ones children choose for themselves. As a result, by the time they leave children's behaviour is good and they are able to work and play together well. Most children reach or exceed expected levels in all areas of learning. Leadership and management are good, although there is the recognition that greater advantage could be taken of the recently enriched outdoor learning area.



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Staff training is up to date and welfare requirements are fully met. There are good plans in place for driving further improvement.

*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

The very large majority of parents and carers who returned the questionnaires are very happy with all aspects of the school. They consider that it provides a very safe and caring environment for their children and that it is well led and managed.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Mary's and St Benedict's Roman 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 83 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 260 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	53	64	28	34	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	56	67	27	33	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	38	46	41	49	3	4	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	50	60	30	36	2	2	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	46	55	35	42	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	41	49	39	47	2	2	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	41	49	41	49	1	1	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)	48	58	34	41	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	42	51	37	45	3	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	43	52	35	42	4	5	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	38	46	38	46	4	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	45	54	37	45	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	53	64	28	34	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.**



18 July 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of St Mary's and St Benedict's Roman Catholic Primary School,  
Preston, PR5 6TA**

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave me and the team when we inspected your school recently.

St Mary's and St Benedict's is a satisfactory school. It has some good and some outstanding features. The headteacher, other staff and the governing body are helping it to improve. You get a good start to your learning in the Reception class and make good progress there as a result of the good teaching, care and leadership and management there. Your progress within the rest of the school is very varied but satisfactory overall. The vast majority of you leave the school with broadly average attainment in English and mathematics. This is because of the wide differences in the quality of teaching across the classes. Teaching is satisfactory overall, with a small amount that is outstanding. The range of subjects that you study is being developed but is not yet being operated consistently across all classes.

The school looks after you well, with good care, guidance and support being provided by the many adults who assist the teaching staff in the school. As a result, you say you feel very safe and highly valued. Your behaviour and attendance are good. You clearly enjoy your learning and make an excellent contribution to daily routines in school and help extensively in the local community. Well done! You also have an excellent sense of what it means to lead a healthy lifestyle, helped by the wide range of sporting and other activities provided by the school. We have asked the school to consider the following things that will help make it improve:

- help the teachers to make sure that all your lessons are at least good
- make sure you all have clear targets so you know what you should be aiming for in your learning

You can help by telling your teachers how best you learn and if you have any problems. I wish you the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Nigel Cromey-Hawke

Lead inspector

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