

# St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Great Eccleston

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	119625
<b>Local authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	379857
<b>Inspection dates</b>	12–13 October 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Steven Hill

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>	37
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Patricia Eastham
<b>Headteacher</b>	David Ramsay
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	26 February 2009
<b>School address</b>	St Mary's Road Great Eccleston Preston PR3 0ZJ
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by an additional inspector. Teaching and learning were observed in seven lessons, taught by four teachers, and pupils were observed during break-times and having lunch. Formal meetings were held with staff, pupils and representatives of the governing body, and the inspector spoke informally to pupils and to parents and carers who were attending consultation meetings. The inspector observed the school's work and scrutinised a range of documentation, particularly that related to self-evaluation, safeguarding and the progress of individual pupils. Samples of pupils' work were examined and questionnaires analysed from pupils, staff and from 25 parents and carers.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work. He looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How well do teachers use assessment information to match activities to pupils' wide-ranging needs in the mixed-age classes?
- Are pupils making sufficient progress in writing?
- Has the excellent provision for care, guidance and support been maintained since the previous inspection?

## Information about the school

This is a very small village primary school in the Diocese of Lancaster. About half the pupils come from the village, with most of the rest coming from other nearby villages. Most pupils are of White British origin and others come from a range of minority ethnic heritages. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average, and many of these have relatively high levels of need. An unusually high proportion of pupils join the school during Key Stage 2. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average. The school has two mixed-age classes, one for Key Stage 2 pupils, and the other for Key Stage 1 pupils and children of Reception age.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory and 4 is inadequate**  
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

The school provides a good education for all its pupils. A key strength is the high quality of care, support and guidance. This ensures that the school is a thriving, harmonious community where boys and girls from a wide range of backgrounds work and play happily together, and enjoy learning. Particularly good support is given to pupils whose circumstances might make them vulnerable, and excellent use is made of partnerships with a range of outside agencies to help these pupils succeed, as well as the expertise of the school's own staff. Pupils' relationships with staff and with each other are excellent, so they feel extremely safe in the school, and their behaviour is outstanding. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to stay healthy. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Underpinning many of these strengths are outstanding links with parents and carers, who are extremely positive about the school and what it provides for their children.

Pupils achieve well and their overall attainment is above average. Standards are particularly high in reading and mathematics and, in most years, many pupils reach the higher Level 3 by the end of Year 2, and Level 5 by the end of Year 6. This has not been the case in writing. Although in the last two years more pupils have reached Level 5 in writing by the end of Year 6, the number still lags behind that for reading and mathematics. The increase is because the school has used good cross-curricular links to make writing tasks more meaningful and interesting, and this aspect continues to improve. The content of pupils' writing is often lively and engaging, although for some, spelling remains a weakness. Although progress for most pupils is now good in writing, it remains weaker than in other subjects.

Pupils' good progress stems from good teaching. Teachers make good use of their knowledge of pupils' different attainment to provide them with tasks that are carefully tailored to their needs. Exceptionally good use is made of skilled extra adults to help provide different activities for pupils of different ages and stages of development in the same class, so that all are suitably challenged and make good progress.

The school's self-evaluation is accurate, based on careful tracking of each individual's progress, as well as rigorous monitoring of provision, led by the headteacher. This means that any weaknesses are identified clearly, and staff work together well to address them. For example, they are already collaborating to improve writing standards. The information about progress enables tailored support to be given to

any individual pupils who need it, supporting their good achievement. This is a key factor, along with the excellent relationships between all pupils, in the school's outstanding promotion of equal opportunities. The school's track record in maintaining its many strengths since the previous inspection, and the clear identification of what issues now need to be addressed, show that it has good capacity to improve in future.

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

- Raise attainment in writing, particularly by increasing the proportion of pupils who reach higher levels at the end of each key stage, by:
  - consolidating the work already started to improve progress, especially in giving pupils exciting things to write about
  - improving spelling, particularly through getting pupils to use a joined handwriting style earlier in Key Stage 1, to help them establish common spelling patterns
  - ensuring that the marking of pupils' writing challenges them to improve in future, and shows them how to do this.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

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All pupils achieve well regardless of background, including those from different minority ethnic heritages, although they do better in reading and mathematics than in writing. In a good lesson with Key Stage 1, the majority of pupils made good progress in their understanding of two- and three-dimensional shapes as they worked in different groups with work matched to their ability. At the same time, a group of pupils in Year 2 from this class made great strides in their literacy skills as they worked with another teacher to write their own scripts for Cinderella. In a Key Stage 2 lesson, older pupils improved their skills in calculations because they were completely involved in the lesson, responding eagerly to the teachers' questions.

Children start in the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that vary widely between individuals and from year to year, but are overall below those expected for the children's ages. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because they are given work that is adapted to their needs, and is suitably challenging. Many pupils who have such needs reach the expected levels in English and mathematics by the end of the school. A high proportion of the pupils who join the school during Key Stage 2 have significant special educational needs and/or disabilities. These pupils settle in well and make good progress, because the school ensures they receive excellent emotional and social support, as well as academic work that is carefully matched to their needs. Strong links with their parents, carers and relevant outside agencies contribute to their happiness in school, as well as improving their achievement.

Pupils' excellent behaviour and positive attitudes contribute well to their learning. A group of older pupils all agreed with one who said, 'Everyone cares for each other'. This is evident around the school, particularly in the kindness that older pupils show to younger ones, and in the way they are tolerant of each other. Pupils feel

extremely safe in school and they have a very good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. They have a clear understanding of a balanced diet, and their great enthusiasm for exercise is seen in playground games, as well as in their participation in sports. In an excellent session with Key Stage 2, pupils made outstanding progress in their hockey skills as they concentrated hard on the teacher's instructions, took pride in their own success, and encouraged their classmates to succeed too. Pupils willingly undertake responsibilities around the school, and contribute their views sensibly, although formal systems to do this are at an early stage of development.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>1</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>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective is the provision?

Teachers manage classes well, and set clear expectations for work and behaviour; pupils like and respect the adults and so try hard to fulfil these expectations. One older pupil said, to general agreement, 'Teachers are good; if you don't understand they will help you.' Good use is made of interactive whiteboards to enthuse pupils and clarify teachers' explanations. Teachers are particularly skilled in using assessment information to ensure that pupils of different ages and skills are given suitable tasks. They monitor pupils' ongoing progress very effectively during lessons, swiftly intervening to help any who go astray, and challenging others to improve their work. The marking of pupils' books is regular and tells pupils how they have succeeded and where they have gone wrong. Written comments, however, seldom challenge them to improve further, or show them how they can do even better next time.

The curriculum is wide-ranging and covers literacy and numeracy skills well. However, pupils are not taught to use a joined handwriting style until relatively late, and some fail to establish common spelling patterns securely. Cross-curricular links are strong, including in information and communication technology, and generate interest and enthusiasm by making learning more meaningful. Pupils agreed that, 'Teachers do interesting things in a fun way, so we understand.' Good use is made of the help of external staff to enhance the curriculum, with specialist teaching for

<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

Spanish, French and music contributing well to pupils' learning. The enrichment of the curriculum through visits, visitors and extra-curricular clubs is excellent. There is a strong emphasis on sport and exercise, with regular swimming lessons from Year 2 onwards that are extremely popular with pupils.

The excellent pastoral care for pupils is greatly appreciated by parents and carers. Several report that their children, who had struggled in previous environments, have thrived at St Mary's. The school is extremely proactive in involving a range of outside expertise to benefit the well-being of its pupils. In addition, staff in the school have extremely good relationships with pupils and respond effectively to their particular needs. Staff consistently promote and reinforce positive moral and social messages and pupils take this on board very well. Pupils themselves make a major contribution to the positive ethos through the way they respect, care for and support each other. Safeguarding procedures are good, and staff are vigilant.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher provides excellent educational direction to the school, and leads a team who work together well to drive improvements. All teachers contribute increasingly well to the school's management, taking a lead with colleagues. Governance is good. The governing body has effective systems that give it a clear view of strengths and weaknesses in the school. It is well able to challenge the school on important decisions, and does so robustly. The governing body has supported staff in ensuring that procedures for safeguarding are good. Procedures are thorough and implemented well. A particular strength is the way pupils are taught many aspects of how to keep safe within the curriculum. Partnerships with outside agencies contribute extremely well to supporting pupils' well-being and to extending and enlivening the curriculum. Excellent systems are in place to keep parents and carers informed about school life, and about their children's learning. Their views are sought regularly and inform important decisions. The careful tracking of individual progress is extremely effective in ensuring all pupils do equally well, regardless of background. The excellent pastoral care ensures that every pupil has equal opportunities to be involved in school life, and eliminates any discrimination. Community cohesion is promoted extremely well in the school itself, and is good in the wider local area, with good involvement in events in local towns. There are some good links made with communities overseas that contribute well to pupils' understanding of the wider world.

*These are the grades for the leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

The provision for Reception children shares many of the strengths of the rest of the school. Within the context of a class which also contains the Key Stage 1 pupils, they are provided with activities that match their particular needs, and fulfil national requirements. Children settle very quickly into school, form good relationships with each other and staff, and follow routines well. They enjoy learning through play and get on very well with their friends. A good balance is provided between activities directed by adults, and those that children choose for themselves, and good use is made of the outdoor provision to support all areas of learning. Adults monitor children’s progress well and use the results effectively to plan what children should do next to take forward their learning. As a result, children make good progress and do particularly well in their personal, social and emotional development. Children are making good progress in literacy skills, and many delight in practising ‘writing’ on the blackboards in the outdoor area. They are developing independence well, and share equipment sensibly. The provision is well managed, with the teachers and other adults working together very effectively. A particular strength is the provision of regular ‘pre-school’ sessions where Reception children work throughout the year, for part of several afternoons, with children due to start at St Mary’s in the subsequent year. This greatly smoothes children’s transition into school.

*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 in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2



## **Views of parents and carers**

Parents and carers are extremely positive about the school and what it provides. The response to the questionnaire was high, representing 25 of the 29 families in the school, and showed that parents and carers value all aspects of the school. They particularly appreciate that their children are safe and happy, and value the way they are informed about their children's progress, which they believe to be good, a view endorsed by inspection evidence. A couple of parents and carers have concerns about how poor behaviour is handled, although about 90% feel this is done well. The inspector saw only good behaviour during the inspection, and the school's records show it has dealt extremely well with pupils who struggle to conform, enabling them to take a full part in school life without disrupting their classmates' progress.

## 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, Great Eccleston 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 inspector received 25 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 37 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	24	96	1	4	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	24	96	1	4	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	19	76	6	24	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	18	72	4	16	1	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	18	72	6	24	1	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	18	72	6	24	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	17	68	8	32	0	0	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)	18	72	6	24	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	18	72	6	24	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	14	56	8	32	2	8	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	15	60	8	32	1	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	18	72	7	28	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	20	80	4	16	0	0	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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 08 April 2011 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.**



14 October 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Great Eccleston, PR3 0ZJ**

Thank you for your warm welcome and all your help when I inspected your school. I enjoyed talking to you and watching you working hard in lessons. You told me that you enjoy school, and I could see why.

Your school gives you a good education. You make good progress in lessons because your teachers are good at helping you to learn. They work hard to make sure you all get things to do that are fun, and that are just right for you. This helps everyone to make good progress. You do not get to such high standards in writing as you do in mathematics and reading. Your teachers have plans to improve this, and I have agreed with them that it should be what they concentrate on this year.

I was very pleased to see that your behaviour is excellent and that you all get on so well together, and that you are kind to each other. You said that you feel really safe in school, and you know a lot about how to keep yourselves safe. You also know a lot about how to stay healthy, and I was impressed by how energetic you are in the playground.

The adults are outstanding at taking care of everyone, and they make sure that if anyone needs special help, then they get it. They are good at organising the school and are keen to make it even better. You can help by keeping up your outstanding behaviour, by trying particularly hard with your writing, and by being careful with your spelling.

I hope you carry on enjoying life at St Mary's.

Yours sincerely

Steven Hill  
Lead inspector

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