

St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Fleetwood

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119623
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	379856
Inspection dates	2–3 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Jean Kendall HMI

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	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	164
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Therese Donnelly
Headteacher	Mark Rogan
Date of previous school inspection	21 October 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. They observed teaching and learning in 14 lessons and saw eight teachers. Meetings were held with representatives of the governing body, groups of pupils and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at documentation, including safeguarding procedures, monitoring, self-evaluation and pupils' progress tracking. Responses to questionnaires returned by pupils, staff and the 33 returned by parents and carers were taken into account.

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

- Pupils' enjoyment and progress in lessons, especially in mathematics.
- How well teaching meets pupils' needs and abilities, especially boys.
- The quality of leadership, monitoring and improvement planning.

Information about the school

St Mary's Catholic Primary is smaller than the average primary school. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals has increased in the last five years from below to above average levels. The proportion identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. The school has achieved an ECO Award and Healthy Schools status and a Quality in Study Support (QiSS). The Early Years Foundation Stage is taught in one Reception class.

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's is a satisfactory school and it is improving. It provides satisfactory value for money. Some aspects of the school's work are good, including the Early Years Foundation Stage and the care, guidance and support provided for all pupils. The school is welcoming and inclusive with a caring ethos. Pupils and staff make a good contribution to promote a strong community spirit and nurturing environment. This ensures that pupils feel very safe and grow in confidence. Parents and carers who returned questionnaires were extremely positive. Comments describing the school as a 'safe, happy environment' with 'teachers that nurture children and help them reach their potential' reflect the views of many.

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with knowledge and skills that are well below those expected for children their age. They make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage, satisfactory progress across Years 1 to 5 and more rapid progress in Year 6. Their attainment at the end of Year 6 has improved in the last two years. In 2011, the results of Key Stage 2 national tests were well above average in English and in line with the national average in mathematics. Most pupils are making expected progress and working close to age-related expectations in all year groups. However, some pupils make slower progress in mathematics than they do in English and boys' progress lags behind that of girls in most classes. As a result, there are some gaps in pupils' mathematical knowledge and skills when they reach Year 6.

Teaching is mostly satisfactory and is improving. There is some that is good. In the most effective lessons pupils enjoy carrying out investigations, solving problems and writing creatively. The teacher intervenes in a timely way to reinforce learning and address any misunderstandings. When teaching is less effective, pupils do not have sufficient time to persevere with challenging tasks and feedback is not explicit enough to ensure they have a clear grasp of the learning objective. Pupils listen attentively and show perseverance in good lessons. However, they become fidgety and distracted in weaker lessons, particularly when they are required to listen for long periods or find tasks bland.

Systems to monitor the quality of provision and to track pupils' progress have improved since the last inspection. They give school leaders and the governing body an accurate view of performance and identify key areas for improvement. Pupils' progress tracking identifies any pupils who are not achieving as well as they should,

so that appropriate support can be put in place. Some initiatives, such as curriculum development and subject specific action plans are recent and the impact of changes on pupils' outcomes has not been evaluated. Middle leaders are taking a more active role in monitoring although their contribution to whole-school evaluation and strategic planning is at early stages. The school has tackled issues identified at the last inspection and raised achievement across the school. There is a clear, collective drive to raise achievement further and 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?

- Sustain pupils' attainment in English and raise their attainment in mathematics, by:
 - improving the quality of teaching from satisfactory to good, using the good practice in the school as an example
 - ensuring that mathematical knowledge and skills are taught progressively
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to actively engage in investigative and creative activities and take responsibility for their learning
 - ensuring that boys are engaged in lessons and make the progress of which they are capable.
- Review the impact of recently introduced systems and new initiatives on the quality of provision and pupils' outcomes and develop the role of middle leaders in evaluation.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils enjoy learning and are motivated to achieve when activities capture their imagination. In good lessons, they are enthusiastic in their responses, show perseverance and behave responsibly when they work independently. They are generally obedient in all lessons but some pupils lose concentration and can distract others if they find activities uninteresting. Most pupils make at least satisfactory progress overall across the school. However, boys do not do as well as girls and they tend to be more easily distracted in weaker lessons. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make similarly satisfactory progress in lessons and more rapid progress in small groups, where they are supported well by teaching assistants.

Although pupils' behaviour in lessons can vary, their behaviour is consistently good in communal areas and when representing the school in the local community. They are polite and treat each other with respect. Bullying or threatening behaviour is rare and pupils are confident that adults will deal with any incidents should they occur. This ensures that all feel very safe. Pupils make a good contribution to the running of the school through the well-established prefect system and school council. The 'green-team' has driven forward eco-school activities to save resources and promote a

healthy lifestyle. Pupils develop a good understanding of how to keep healthy, reflected in their healthy lunchboxes and school meal choices and their participation in physical activity.

The school is very well regarded by the local community and pupils are rightly proud of their work to support community groups and charities. Pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is integrated into all aspects of school and is good. They have a keen sense of right and wrong and good understanding of ethical issues. Their understanding of other cultures and respect for people with different beliefs is promoted further through links with a school in India. Pupils’ attendance is improving and it is now in line with the national average. The use of information and communication technology (ICT) is promoted well in lessons and pupils are proficient in their use of ICT. These skills, together with improving literacy and numeracy skills, prepare them adequately for the next stage of their education.

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	3
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

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is satisfactory in the majority of lessons and good in some. The most successful learning occurs where teachers give clear explanations, fully involve pupils in discussion and provide interesting activities. When teaching is less effective pupils lose interest as they are passive for too long. Accurate assessment means that group work is mostly well matched to pupils’ different ability levels. However, assessment is not always used as effectively to adapt teaching and give clear feedback during lessons. Pupils who are not making expected progress are well supported by teaching assistants in small groups. Good-quality marking helps pupils to understand how they can improve their work.

The curriculum has been reviewed and adequately meets pupils’ needs. The current approach with some cross-curricular topics and some discrete subject teaching is popular with pupils and allows teachers to plan creatively. They are particularly attentive of boys’ interests in planning topics and this has helped to engage boys to a

¹The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

greater extent in topic-based lessons. The curriculum is still at early stages of development and as yet the school does not evaluate its impact on pupils' achievement and monitor breadth and balance. There are good opportunities for pupils to enrich their experiences through after-school clubs and activities.

Pupils make good gains in their personal development because they receive effective care, guidance and support. The school makes pupils and their families feel welcomed when they first start and provides good ongoing care and guidance. Those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities or whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable receive very good support from all staff. Effective links with outside agencies support their welfare well. The school has taken good action to help pupils attend and participate fully in school life. The caring and supportive approach helps pupils feel safe, be happy and grow in confidence.

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, the governing body and staff are fully committed to improving provision and raising the achievement of all pupils. Although some developments are at early stages, professional development is well planned to ensure that the ambitions for each pupil and the school as a whole can be realised. The regular meetings to review pupils' progress are effective in identifying any pupils who may be underachieving. Staff are taking appropriate action to promote equality of opportunity and ensure that pupils who have underachieved in the past are supported to make more rapid progress. They are aware of the performance gap between boys and girls and are working to address it. Pupils from different backgrounds get on well together and there is no evidence of any form of discrimination.

The governing body provides satisfactory leadership and has a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Members of the governing body have undertaken training to help them challenge and support leadership. Governors' links with classes means that they meet frequently with pupils and staff and know the school well. Safeguarding procedures are rigorous. Staff and the governing body are fully aware of their responsibilities and provide good care and support. The school makes a strong and carefully planned contribution to community cohesion through its work with a number of community groups and the Fleetwood Excellence Cluster. There is a strong partnership of schools within the area, working closely together to enhance the quality of provision. This enhances the curriculum and supports pupils in making a smooth transition to secondary school. The school provides good support, information and advice for all parents and carers. The Family Learning Mentor provides further support and advice relevant to needs. Staff and the

governing body work hard to involve parents and carers in the school and their children's education and have good plans in place to develop these aspects further.

These are the grades for the 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	2
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 in the Early Years Foundation Stage settle quickly because adults are welcoming, caring and supportive. They ensure that children feel very safe and help them grow in confidence. Children enter the Reception class with knowledge and skills that are mostly well below those expected for their age and make good progress across all areas of learning. However, many children have language and social skills that are below average levels when they enter Key Stage 1. The environment is well planned to provide plentiful opportunities for independent, purposeful learning. Children can access resources easily and enjoy a host of interesting activities that stimulate their imagination. The outdoor area is well organised but was not being used to its full potential at the time of the inspection. Children show curiosity and enthusiasm for learning; they quickly get to know routines and behave well.

Good leadership ensures that there is a broad curriculum with appropriate balance between whole class and small group teaching and activities that can be independently accessed by children. The taught sessions are generally of good quality and the teacher models the use of language and mathematical skills exceptionally well. Teaching assistants provide good role models but as they are new to the Reception class their knowledge of the six areas of learning is not fully developed. Some of the teaching about the sounds that letters make (phonics) is slow-paced and not as well matched to children's learning needs as it could be. Assessment is used effectively to plan for next steps in learning in all other areas. Staff have good relationships with the children and their families. Parents and carers are well informed through the weekly newsletter and daily interactions.

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 in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

All parents and carers who returned questionnaires feel that their children enjoy school and the vast majority are happy with their children’s experience. Several commented on the positive ethos and nurturing environment of the school, stating for example, ‘the open-door policy and family atmosphere makes it easy to sort out any issues’. A few parents and carers feel that their children are not making enough progress. Inspectors agree that there has been some underachievement in the past but found that the school is taking appropriate action to help children catch up with their learning.

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, Fleetwood 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 **33** completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 164 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	21	66	11	34	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	25	78	7	22	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	19	59	12	38	0	0	1	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	18	56	10	31	3	9	1	3
The teaching is good at this school	20	63	11	34	1	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	19	59	12	38	1	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	14	44	15	47	1	3	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)	12	38	16	50	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	16	50	14	44	1	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	16	50	12	38	1	3	1	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	18	56	11	34	0	0	1	3
The school is led and managed effectively	13	41	19	59	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	16	50	15	47	1	3	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 is 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).

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.



4 November 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Fleetwood FY7 6EU

Thank you for your warm welcome when we inspected your school recently. We found your school to be satisfactory and improving. Some aspects of the school's work are good, including the Early Years Foundation Stage and the care, guidance and support you receive. All staff work hard to make sure the school is welcoming, safe and happy. You play an important part in this. You make a good contribution to the running of the school and behave considerately in communal areas.

Teaching is mostly satisfactory and there is some that is good. Where teaching is at its best you are enthusiastic learners and make good progress. However, there are some lessons where activities do not interest you sufficiently. In these lessons a few pupils can distract from the learning of others.

Most of you make satisfactory progress across the whole school. You do really well in English – well done! Your progress in mathematics is slower but improving. Girls do better than boys in most classes but the gap is closing.

School leaders have introduced a number of new initiatives to monitor your progress and make teaching more interesting. They are doing the right things to make sure all of you make the best possible progress. Staff are fully committed to making improvements and we are sure they will continue to do so. There are a couple of areas we have asked the school to carry on improving.

- To raise your attainment in mathematics and sustain attainment in English. We have asked teachers to make sure mathematics skills are taught progressively in each year group and activities interest all pupils, including boys.
- To review the impact of new initiatives on your learning and personal development and check that all staff with management roles contribute to evaluation.

We would like to wish everyone at your school every success in the future.

Yours sincerely,

Jean Kendall

Her Majesty's Inspector, on behalf of the inspection team

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