

# St Mary's Catholic Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	124358
<b>Local Authority</b>	Staffordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	380871
<b>Inspection dates</b>	1–2 December 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Alison Cogher

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	410
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Phillip Guest
<b>Headteacher</b>	Bernadette Sims
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	4 June 2009
<b>School address</b>	Stanier Street Newcastle ST5 2SU
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<b>Email address</b>	office@st-marys-newcastle.staffs.sch.uk

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	1–2 December 2011
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. Twenty-six lessons were observed and 15 teachers seen. The inspectors met with pupils, staff and members of the governing body. They observed the school's work, and looked at school documentation and policies including safeguarding information, assessment and tracking data, pupils' work, and teachers' planning. Questionnaires from 108 parents and carers were received and analysed together with questionnaires from pupils and school staff.

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

- How consistently pupils are supported to make good progress and attain highly in reading, writing and mathematics in different age groups.
- How much pupils know about their own learning and what they need to do next to improve their work.
- How well school leaders use monitoring and assessment information to secure school improvement.

## Information about the school

This school is larger than the average primary school. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The remainder of the school population come from a range of ethnic backgrounds. Nearly a fifth of the pupils at the school speak English as an additional language and a small minority of these are at the early stages of learning English. An average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. The number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is average but varies markedly between year groups. During the long-term leave of absence of the headteacher the school is being led by two acting headteachers. The school has been awarded Dyslexia Friendly and Healthy School Status. The school runs a before- and after-school club.

**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

The achievement of pupils is satisfactory, although actions taken over the last term to raise expectations are beginning to improve aspects of pupils' progress. The recent upturn has been secured because of improved attention to ensuring pupils' work is accurately assessed, and better use of this information to guide target setting and lesson planning. Levels of attainment are broadly average by the end of Year 6 and pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics in all year groups is broadly satisfactory. A recent focus on writing is helping to lift attainment, and school data show that the proportion of pupils making good progress in all subjects is rising. Another improvement since the last inspection is apparent in the pupils' increasing involvement in the setting of their own targets. Teaching is satisfactory overall. There is some good teaching but the quality varies between classes and subjects, and inconsistencies in key aspects contribute to pupils' uneven progress. These include the marking of pupils' work, checking pupils' understanding and giving pupils the opportunity to check their own and each other's work during lessons, and the use made of assessment information to plan activities that closely match pupils' learning needs.

The school works effectively with parents and carers to keep them informed and able to contribute to their children's learning. These productive links are reflected in the overwhelmingly positive questionnaire responses. All groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, receive good levels of care, guidance and support. Relationships between pupils and adults are respectful, supportive and productive. Consequently, pupils feel safe and secure at school and able to ask adults for help when they need it. Pupils behave well, display positive attitudes to learning and have a good understanding of how to keep themselves fit and healthy. They contribute well to the school and local community. Pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development reflects the school's strong spiritual and moral values and expectations. These positive aspects of pupils' development, together with their broadly average levels of attainment, prepare them satisfactorily for the next stage of their education.

The acting headteachers, staff and the governing body share a commitment to succeed. Their self-evaluation is generally accurate and has informed a school development plan that sets out appropriate key priorities for improvement. Monitoring and evaluation of the school's activities are largely the responsibility of the acting headteachers; middle leaders are not yet making a full contribution. Nevertheless, the actions to bring these plans to fruition are underway and include

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improved assessment procedures which are providing staff with a clear overview of pupils' performance. Such positive elements and the improvement secured since the last inspection show that the school has a satisfactory capacity to improve further.

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?

- Increase the rate of pupils' progress to raise attainment in reading, writing and mathematics by:
  - improving the quality and consistency of teaching in all classes so that 80% is judged good or better by July 2012
  - ensuring that full use is made of assessment information for planning activities in lessons so they closely match the differing needs of all pupils
  - agreeing and implementing whole-school procedures for checking pupils' understanding in lessons and providing pupils with the skills and opportunities to check their own and each other's work
  - agreeing and implementing whole-school procedures for the marking of pupils' work so that it clearly indicates what they have learned, how well they are doing and what they need to do next to improve.
- Develop the role of middle leaders so that they have the skills and knowledge to enable them to contribute fully to the whole-school improvement of teaching and pupils' achievement.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**3**

Children start school with broadly the expected skills and abilities. They make satisfactory progress through the Nursery and Reception classes. This satisfactory progress continues in Years 1 to 6 in reading, writing and mathematics. There are positive signs that pupils' progress is rising, but this is not yet firmly established as an improving trend. Pupils make faster progress in lessons where expectations for pupils of all abilities are high and activities are informed by an accurate knowledge and understanding of their previous learning. For example, pupils in Year 2 were challenged to identify the correct payment for objects using coins of different value. Working in pairs to complete this work was particularly valuable as they were able to check each other's solutions. Pupils whose knowledge and understanding of money were more secure solved written 'shopping' problems, including calculating the change they would receive having made their purchase. In lessons where all pupils work on largely similar activities, too many make limited progress in their learning.

There is no marked difference in progress and achievement between different groups of pupils, such as those known to be eligible for free school meals and those from

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different ethnic groups, including those who speak English as an additional language. Staff know pupils well and cater sensitively for their needs as individuals and in small groups. As a result, the support provided for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is sufficient to ensure that they make similar progress to other pupils. Their satisfactory basic skills development, including the use of information and communication technology (ICT), together with their ability to work productively together help pupils to be soundly prepared for the future.

Pupils demonstrate a mature approach to keeping themselves safe in a variety of situations. They participate enthusiastically in a range of sporting activities and understand the benefits of a balanced diet. Pupils develop a clear understanding of right and wrong and show respect for others from different backgrounds. They take on a range of responsibilities and are keen to contribute to the life of the school and local community. Links with the church are wide-ranging and the school choir regularly performs in it, and at a number of other local venues. Pupils enthusiastically involve themselves in local fundraising events and competitions. For example, pupils in Year 6 were genuinely pleased for, and proud of, a classmate who won a competition to design a poster promoting Fairtrade. The presentation of his award by the mayor and local member of parliament was enjoyed and celebrated by all.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

**How effective is the provision?**

In lessons where teachers use a range of strategies to capture pupils' interest, they make good progress. For example, in a good Year 5 mathematics lesson pupils were

<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

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helped to use their knowledge of how to calculate perimeters of shapes to solve problems. The effective use of the interactive whiteboard and pupils' ideas and explanations enabled the whole class to see how to make these calculations accurately. More-able pupils were then challenged to use their skills further to solve the problem of how many houses could be built on a plot of a given size. This level of positive interaction is not evident in all lessons. The use of questioning to check pupils' understanding too often requires pupils to answer with an already known fact that does not move their learning forward. Teachers mark pupils work regularly and comments are typically supportive, which encourages pupils to try hard with their work. However, too few references are made to the objectives of the lesson and pupils' targets to provide them with clear information about how well they are doing or guidance on how to improve. Some pupils are also provided with checklists against which they are encouraged to evaluate their own and each other's work, but this effective practice is not consistent between classes or subjects.

The curriculum includes appropriate links between subjects so that pupils have suitable opportunities to practise and develop their key literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. Additional enrichment activities such as a good range of visits, visitors and after-school activities expand pupils' learning well. Participation in music activities is particularly strong. The before- and after-school club provision is good and much enjoyed by the pupils who attend.

Comments such as 'The school caters for each individual and shows care, consideration and respect for every child' reflect parents' and carers' confidence in the care, guidance and support provided. The help given to pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities enables them to access all the school has to offer. Working closely with parents and carers and outside agencies, the school provides tailored support for pupils with a range of different additional needs, including learning English as an additional language, which makes a good contribution to their personal and academic development.

*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 acting headteachers have established a shared vision to secure improvement in pupils' progress and attainment. They have moved quickly to implement procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching and tracking pupils' progress. This work has, in a short time, produced improvements that are showing in the school's assessment

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data and pupils' work in lessons. Priorities for improvement are clearly articulated and understood by staff and the governing body. This improvement has, however, been largely due to the work of the acting headteachers. Middle managers, including subject leaders, do not have the full range of skills such as analysing data and monitoring and evaluating lessons to enable them to contribute fully to the school improvement process. The governing body is supportive and keen to help the school to improve but is in the early stages of developing independent monitoring strategies that will enable it to hold the school to account. Procedures to ensure that no discrimination occurs and pupils' achievement is promoted equally are satisfactory. Safeguarding procedures meet requirements and staff are vigilant in ensuring that they are followed correctly.

The school works well with parents and carers. They are kept well informed and are encouraged to be actively involved in workshops and school events. Links with other schools and partner institutions are developing well. Collaborative work has, for example, enabled teachers to improve their skills of assessing pupils' work. Provision in the area of community cohesion is satisfactory. Local links are well established, although links to communities further afield are less strong and their impact on pupils' full understanding and appreciation of social, cultural and religious diversity is yet to be realised.

*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>3</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>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Supportive induction procedures and effective ongoing links with parents and carers ensure that children settle quickly into both the Nursery and Reception classes. Warm relationships help children to engage positively in the activities provided. Most children learn to play constructively together and enjoy each other's company. The



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range of planned activities takes appropriate account of children’s experiences and interests. In this way children’s enthusiasm is fostered and they develop positive attitudes to learning. Assessment of children’s learning is generally accurate and planning also takes this information into account, so activities take children’s learning forwards at a steady rate. Children’s early literacy and numeracy skills are supported through adult-led activities but opportunities for children to practise these skills through their play are somewhat limited. Where they are provided, children engage enthusiastically and make good gains in their learning. For example, children in the Nursery class enjoyed singing ‘Five Birthday Candles’ which helped them to count up to, and backwards from, five. Some then went on to work with their teacher to make cakes for ‘Mr Bunny’s birthday’ to which they added candles. However, this effective teaching is not consistently evident across the Early Years Foundation Stage classes. The deployment of teaching assistants, use of resources and management of children are variable. As a result learning opportunities are not maximised and some children do not engage fully in either adult-led or independently-chosen activities. Leadership is satisfactory, with appropriate action plans for improvement. Teamwork is strong and all staff are enthusiastic and show a determination to ensure the momentum of improvement is increased.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

**Views of parents and carers**

The very large majority of parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire indicated that they are happy with the school’s provision for their children. A number were very positive about the support they and their children had received from the school. This confidence in the school is borne out by inspection findings that relate to the good quality of care, guidance and support provided by the school. A very few parents and carers indicated that they were concerned about the progress children make. Inspection findings confirm that progress is not consistent across the school but is satisfactory overall.

### 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 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 108 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 410 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	73	68	35	32	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	81	75	25	23	2	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	54	50	43	40	5	5	4	4
My child is making enough progress at this school	61	56	36	33	8	7	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	67	62	34	31	5	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	61	56	40	37	4	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	62	57	40	37	5	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)	52	48	51	47	1	1	1	1
The school meets my child’s particular needs	54	50	51	47	2	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	52	48	42	39	10	9	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	46	43	55	51	7	6	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	53	49	43	40	7	6	3	3
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	65	60	38	35	3	3	1	1

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 8 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.**



5 December 2011

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Newcastle, ST5 2SU**

Thank you for making us feel welcome at your school. We have judged your school to be satisfactory. From the results of the survey some of you completed and our discussions with you, we know that there are a number of things you like about your school.

Here are some of the best things we found.

- You behave well, and adults in school do a good job of taking care of you.
- You know how to keep yourselves safe and how to stay fit and healthy.
- You enjoy being involved in activities in your community and you like taking on responsibilities at school.
- You enjoy school and like to take part in the extra activities provided for you, including music and sport.

This is what we have asked your school to do next, to help it improve.

- Make more lessons good, so you all make better progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Make sure that teachers make better use of the information they collect about your progress, so lesson activities challenge you all to do well at just the right level.
- Ensure that teachers check your understanding in lessons, and when they mark your work, tell you how well you are doing and how to improve.
- Make sure that you know how to check your own and each other's work, so that you can spot and correct any mistakes.
- Make sure that all leaders in the school can help the school to improve.

All of you can help by continuing to behave well and work hard in all your lessons.

Yours sincerely

Alison Cogher  
Lead inspector

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