

St Maria Goretti Catholic Primary School, Preston

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119608
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	379852
Inspection dates	7–8 December 2011
Reporting inspector	Brian Holmes

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	170
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jenny Martin
Headteacher	Elaine Chambers
Date of previous school inspection	7 July 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed teaching and learning in 13 lessons and observed eight teachers. Meetings were held with parents and carers, groups of pupils, members of the governing body and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at its assessment data, evidence of activities and events, information about the curriculum, safeguarding arrangements and monitoring and evaluation documents. Inspectors analysed 48 questionnaires completed by parents and carers, 60 pupil questionnaires and 6 questionnaires returned by staff.

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

- How effectively the school is closing the gap in pupils' attainment in writing.
- Whether progress in English is fast enough in Key Stage 2.
- Whether the quality of provision is effective in meeting the needs of all pupils in English and enables them to apply their skills in all subjects.
- Whether pupils know how to improve their own learning.
- How effectively all leaders, including subject leaders and governors, monitor and evaluate the impact of actions they take to improve pupil outcomes.

Information about the school

This is a smaller than average primary school, which has increased in size since the previous inspection. The large majority of pupils is from White British backgrounds, with an increasing number of pupils from other backgrounds, notably from Eastern Europe. The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is higher than average and there is higher than average mobility of pupils in and out of the school. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average. Recently, there have been significant changes to staffing at the school. At the time of the inspection the school was being led by an associate headteacher and an associate deputy headteacher. The school has achieved Healthy School status.

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

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

This is a satisfactory school. Strengths in the quality of care, guidance and support provided for pupils create a happy atmosphere for learning. The effectiveness of this provision is typified by the efforts the school has made to improve attendance, which is now above average. Parents, carers and pupils all appreciate the level of care provided by the school. The associate headteacher and deputy headteacher have robustly tackled the task of improving standards of achievement in English.

Children make an appropriate start and make satisfactory progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. When they enter Year 1, their skills are below those expected for their age. In Years 1 to 6, pupils make satisfactory progress to reach standards broadly in line with the national average by the end of Year 6. A focus on writing is improving attainment in both Key Stages, and increasing rates progress in English in Key Stage 2. However, there are inconsistencies in the way that teachers mark pupils' work and offer them feedback about how to improve it. The teaching does not provide pupils with enough opportunities to check their own work, or that of other pupils, so that they understand how to improve. In their lessons, pupils learn basic skills but they are not provided with enough opportunities to apply their reading, writing, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills in all their learning.

Pupils enjoy coming to school and demonstrate positive attitudes to their learning. One pupil typically commented 'lessons and learning are fun'. Pupils from different backgrounds get on well together and behave well. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe. They enjoy the extra opportunities provided in lessons, after school and from visiting coaches, and demonstrate a good understanding of how to live healthily. They make a good contribution to the life of the school and the community. Older pupils are proud of their role as prefects and in setting a good example to younger pupils. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They have a good understanding of right and wrong and are developing a clear set of personal values.

The associate headteacher and deputy headteacher, along with the governing body, have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Through accurate self-evaluation they are addressing weaknesses in pupils' learning. The resulting improvements in writing and progress in English in Key Stage 2, the improvement in attendance and the consolidation of pupils' good personal

development are clear indications that the school has a satisfactory capacity to sustain its improvement.

Up to 40% of 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 pupils' achievement and the quality of provision by:
 - ensuring that the quality of marking and feedback is consistent across all subjects and enables pupils to understand clearly how to improve their work
 - providing pupils with regular planned opportunities to assess their own work and that of other pupils
 - providing pupils with more planned opportunities to apply their reading, writing, ICT and numeracy skills in all their subjects.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Most children join the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills below those expected for their age. In Years 1 to 6, the progress of all pupils is satisfactory. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, pupils who join the school at different times and the increasing number of pupils who are at an early stage of learning English. Attainment in writing is improving in both Key Stage 1 and in Key Stage 2 and this is narrowing the gap with the national average. Analysis of pupils' work and school assessment data indicate that pupils' rates of progress in English in Key Stage 2 are improving. By the end of Year 6, standards are broadly average in both English and mathematics. Pupils are keen to learn and they demonstrate good levels of engagement and interest. This was seen in a Years 4/5 literacy lesson where pupils used their knowledge of mythical stories to write descriptions of monsters. They collaborated well with partners to talk about, and refine, their ideas. Pupils' learning is no better than satisfactory because they have too few opportunities to apply key concepts in a variety of situations and they are not clear enough about how to improve their own work.

Pupils' personal development is good. Pupils respond quickly to teachers' expectations in lessons and their good behaviour fosters good attitudes. They are keen to take on additional responsibilities as play leaders and librarians. The school council takes an active role in representing pupils' views and organising fundraising activities. There are close links with the church and pupils are involved closely with the local community through music and dance festivals. Assemblies make a good contribution to pupils' spiritual development and they appreciate differences and diversity through their study of different faiths and cultures. Improved attendance is contributing positively towards pupils' development and, together with their satisfactory achievement, ensures that they are appropriately prepared 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	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is characterised by good relationships between adults and pupils, the good use of adults to support learning and an effective range of strategies to make learning accessible to pupils. This was seen in a Years 1/2 literacy lesson 'How to build a snowman', where pupils were enthusiastically engaged in groups, writing sets of instructions that could be used by others. Teaching effectively structures learning in most lessons to meet pupils' needs. It is less successful when planning does not address weaknesses in pupils' prior learning or when too much time is taken up explaining to pupils what they are expected to do without clarifying the expectations of what they should achieve. Outstanding practice in the use of assessment to support learning is evident in some lessons in Key Stage 2 where every opportunity is taken to address pupils' misconceptions in their learning, reinforce expectations and re-shape tasks when needed. However, the use of assessment to support pupils' learning is inconsistent overall. The teaching provides pupils with too few opportunities to check their own work, or that of other pupils, so as to develop an understanding of how to improve their work. Marking and feedback makes clear to pupils what they have done well and what they need to do next in literacy, but this quality of feedback is not consistently applied in the marking of pupils' work in all their subjects.

The curriculum makes a satisfactory contribution to the achievement of all pupils. It places an appropriate emphasis on developing pupils' basic skills in reading, writing, numeracy and ICT, with other subjects taught through themed approaches. There is an appropriate range of strategies and interventions, especially in literacy through reading recovery, systematic teaching of the links between sounds and letters, and the recent focus on improving pupils' attainment in writing. However, the application of pupils' basic skills is not well developed and they are not provided with enough planned opportunities to improve their achievement by applying their basic skills in all their subjects. The curriculum makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development through personal, social and health education. Pupils appreciate the

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

good variety of enrichment opportunities that they are provided with, such as Health Week, experiences to develop their enterprise skills, and visitors into school for dance and music.

Pupils are well cared for and there are warm relationships between adults and pupils. This gives pupils confidence in the levels of care that they receive. The school treats pupils as individuals and meets the vast majority of pupils' needs well. Pupils are clear that if there are any concerns, there are adults whom they trust and go to. Systems for checking pupils' attendance are rigorous and the Family Support Worker has played a central role in the rapid improvement in attendance. There are effective arrangements for the transfer of pupils to other schools.

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?

The associate headteacher and deputy headteacher have robustly tackled weaknesses in pupils' attainment in writing to bring about improvement. Thorough checking of pupils' performance and the quality of provision has resulted in the adjustment of the school's priorities to address the need to improve pupils' progress in English. Leaders of other subject areas are involved in these processes and have clear roles and responsibilities. Their role in checking the effects of actions to improve performance and provision has had less impact so far because the systems introduced have not had enough time to become fully established. The school promotes equality of opportunity satisfactorily to meet the needs of all its pupils. Its inclusive approach has a positive effect on pupils' well-being.

The governing body fulfils its statutory requirements and is fully involved in shaping the direction of the school. Its members check school performance through their work on committees. Systems for them to check performance more closely, through involvement with pupils in classes, have been introduced but are not fully established. Arrangements for safeguarding meet current requirements and are supported by appropriate documentation. The school works closely with parents and carers, and rising attendance levels demonstrate their increasing engagement with their children's learning. Partnerships to support pupils' well-being are more effective and further developed than those to support pupils' learning. The promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory. The school is a harmonious and cohesive community with good links in the local area. Plans to promote pupils' understanding beyond the immediate locality are at an early stage of implementation.

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	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Children make satisfactory progress. By the time they enter Year 1, outcomes are still below age-related expectations overall. The new leader has identified appropriate priorities to improve the quality of provision. She is working hard with the other adults to develop a consistent approach to children's learning in both the Nursery and Reception classes. Assessment is being used to ensure that activities address weaknesses in children's learning, and also excite and stimulate children's interest and curiosity. Reception children, for example, are excited by the 'Floppy Dog and Bone' reading kits that they take home. Parents and carers appreciate the 'Wishing Tree' where they set targets for their children to achieve, and also their increased involvement in their children's learning.

Children enjoy their learning and are happy and excited when they come into school. They concentrate well and develop confidence and independence in their learning and behaviour. The caring approach of adults ensures that children feel safe and secure in the warm and welcoming learning environment. Children get on well with each other and know how to share and take turns. Evidence from the inspection indicates that children's progress is improving and beginning to accelerate, especially in the Reception class.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation stage	3
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 in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

The very large majority of parents and carers who returned a questionnaire indicated that they are happy with their children's experiences at school. They feel that their children enjoy school and that the school keeps their children safe. The inspection findings reflect these positive views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Maria Goretti Catholic Primary School, Preston 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 48 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 170 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	21	44	27	56	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	28	58	20	42	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	14	29	30	63	4	8	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	15	31	30	63	2	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	20	42	27	56	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	13	27	31	65	2	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	18	38	30	63	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)	14	29	28	58	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	13	27	33	69	2	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	14	29	33	69	1	2	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	12	25	32	67	2	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	18	38	27	56	1	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	25	52	23	48	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 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.



9 December 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Maria Goretti Catholic Primary School, Preston, PR2 6SJ

Thank you for being so polite, welcoming and friendly when the inspectors visited your school recently. We enjoyed our time at St. Maria Goretti, particularly the time we spent talking to you. We know that you are proud of your school and that you like your teachers a lot.

St. Maria Goretti is a satisfactory school with several strengths. You told us that the school is a caring place where everyone looks after each other. We were impressed by your good attendance, your good understanding of how to stay safe and live healthily, and by your good behaviour. The standards that you reach are broadly average by the end of Year 6. You make satisfactory progress in your learning due to teaching that is satisfactory. You told us that you like your teachers who make learning fun. You enjoy the activities that are on offer in lessons and the extra activities that are provided through sports activities and visits. You make a good contribution to the school and told us you like the responsibilities that you are given, such as play leaders, librarians and as members of the school council.

We are asking the school to improve the quality of marking so that it is the same in all your work and helps you to improve your learning. We are also asking the school to give you more opportunities to check your own work and that of other pupils. Lastly, we have asked the school to give you more opportunities to use your ICT, reading, writing and numeracy skills in all of your subjects.

All of you can help by continuing to work hard, behaving well and doing your best to help the school improve further.

Yours sincerely,

Brian Holmes
Lead Inspector

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