

# St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Morecambe

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	119622
<b>Local authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	379855
<b>Inspection dates</b>	30–31 May 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Geoffrey Yates

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>	155
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Susan Grubic
<b>Headteacher</b>	Michael Manton
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	5 March 2009
<b>School address</b>	Coniston Road Morecambe LA4 5PS
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## Introduction

Inspection team

Geoffrey Yates  
Kathleen McArthur

Additional inspector  
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector visited 19 lessons, observing eight teachers. Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders, teaching staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and two other members of the governing body and groups of pupils. The inspectors also heard 13 pupils read. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at the minutes of the governing body meetings, the systems for assessing and monitoring pupils' progress, safeguarding procedures, pupils' work, and teachers' planning and marking. Inspectors also took account of questionnaires completed by 33 parents and carers and those returned by pupils and staff.

## Information about the school

This is a smaller than average sized primary school and most pupils are of White British heritage. There is a growing number of pupils of Eastern European heritage who are at early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average. The school meets the current floor standards, which sets the government's minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. It has several awards, including the nationally accredited Healthy Schools 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

<b>Overall Effectiveness</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>3</b>

## Key Findings

- This is a satisfactory school. It is not yet good because pupils' achievement is satisfactory rather than good and teaching is also satisfactory, although there are examples of good teaching. Schools where overall effectiveness is judged to be satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next Section 5 inspection.
- Pupils make satisfactory progress. Children achieve soundly in the Early Years Foundation Stage from starting points which are below those expected for their age. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment is average in mathematics and broadly average in English, but it is higher in reading than in writing. More-able pupils are not sufficiently challenged to use their writing skills well. In some classes, pupils' punctuation, spelling and handwriting skills are not developed well enough.
- Where teaching is good, lessons move at a fast pace and teachers are effective in ensuring that pupils know exactly what they need to do and how to do it. In the majority of classes, where teaching is satisfactory rather than good, questioning is not used well, the pace of lessons is slow and steps are not taken to ensure pupils take full notice of comments made when their work is marked. Insufficient opportunities are provided for pupils to use their writing skills well in other subjects.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are good. Any incidents of bullying or racial harassment are dealt with well. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe in various situations, including when using the internet.
- Leadership and management are satisfactory, including the leadership of teaching and the management of performance. However, not enough is done to involve senior staff in the strategic management of the school. A key strength of leadership is the emphasis given to pupils' personal development and the high level of care provided for pupils.

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

- Accelerate progress in writing so that overall attainment is above average by:
  - ensuring more-able pupils are provided with more challenging opportunities to use their writing skills in literacy lessons
  - ensuring that in all classes pupils develop well their punctuation, basic spelling and handwriting skills
  - providing more opportunities for all pupils to use their writing skills in subjects across the curriculum.
  
- Improve the quality of teaching to good or better by:
  - increasing the pace of lessons so that all pupils are actively engaged in learning
  - ensuring questioning is used well to promote pupils' understanding
  - ensuring marking is consistently effective and that teachers check that pupils have taken account of the comments made.
  
- Provide more opportunities for senior staff to be actively involved in the strategic management of the school by:
  - involving them more in evaluating the quality of pupils' learning
  - ensuring that there are consistent approaches across the school, especially with regard to teachers' planning and pupils' presentation of their work.

## Main Report

### Achievement of pupils

Typically, pupils have good attitudes towards learning and are keen to take part in small group or whole-class discussions. For example, they are keen to talk about what books they like and why. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory throughout the school with broadly average attainment by the time pupils leave Year 6. Attainment in reading is average at the end of both Key Stages 1 and 2. Parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire believe that their children make good progress and that their needs are met well. However, the school's own judgement and pupils' work seen in lessons and books show that although there are pockets of good progress reflecting where teaching is of a good quality, overall, learning and progress are satisfactory. At times, progress accelerates, especially in mathematics, when the work set really challenges pupils to use their skills well. For example, in Year 6 more-able pupils used their calculating skills well in working out the highest square numbers. However, across the school more-able pupils are not always challenged sufficiently, especially with regard to developing their writing skills. There is some good practice, as in more-able pupils ably producing persuasive letters asking the local council to provide more funds to promote the restoration of a Victorian building in the local area. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make progress in line with their peers. This is because teachers and teaching assistants work well together. The increasing numbers of pupils who speak English as an additional language make at least satisfactory progress, with evidence of good progress in some classes.

Children in the Reception class make satisfactory progress overall from their knowledge and skills on entry, which are below those expected for their age. They make good progress in

their personal, social and emotional development, behaving sensibly, safely and considerately. Children sound out groups of letters increasingly confidently. In Key Stage 1, only a minority of pupils demonstrate a secure understanding of basic punctuation, spelling and sentence formation. There is no whole-school approach to developing pupils' handwriting skills. Much work is not always presented well in some classes as a result.

In 2011, the progress of pupils from Key Stage 1 to 2 was above average in mathematics but below average in English. Inspection evidence shows this issue has now been addressed. However, not enough has been done to raise the attainment of all pupils, especially the more-able pupils in writing, and there are few opportunities for pupils to practise their handwriting skills across the curriculum.

## Quality of teaching

Most pupils say teaching is good and almost all parents and carers agree. However, inspectors judge the quality of teaching to be satisfactory, with an increasing amount that is good. Where teaching is at its best, teachers plan stimulating activities that fully engage pupils through effective questioning and group work that is accurately matched to their specific learning needs and capabilities. For example, in a Year 2 class, the development of pupils' understanding of a fair test in science was interesting, stimulating and challenging and pupils engaged with the activities well. Pupils decided different ways of carrying out the tests to show the impact of different amounts of light and water on plant growth. As a result, they made good progress in their scientific learning. The teaching of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is satisfactory with good support provided by teaching assistants.

Where teaching is satisfactory, the pace is slow, there is less variety in activities and work is not always planned well enough to ensure activities are suitably matched to pupils' capabilities, particularly for the more able. At times, questioning is too directed to pupils volunteering answers, which diminishes opportunities for less-confident pupils to show their understanding. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, learning is satisfactory but opportunities are missed to ensure that children get the most out of the activities. However, the curriculum meets young children's needs, especially their personal needs, well.

Assessment procedures have improved since the previous inspection. Teachers are now using more effectively the information gained from assessment and are planning better to meet the needs of different groups. For example, reading groups are organised well, thus ensuring that pupils make at least satisfactory progress in developing their reading skills. However, there is no consistent approach across the school in relation to teachers' planning of work and lessons. Marking procedures are good for older pupils but marking is not used consistently well across the school. Not enough checks are made to ensure that pupils take notice of the comments to improve their work.

Teaching promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding satisfactorily. Social, moral and emotional aspects of learning are covered well, but pupils' understanding of cultures different from their own is less well developed.

## Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils enjoy school. During the inspection, this was very apparent, for example, in the enjoyment shown by members of the school choir when practising the songs they would perform at a jubilee concert for the local community. The school's monitoring of and consistent approaches to managing pupils' behaviour have resulted in no incidents of racism and few incidents of bullying over time. Behaviour is typically good. Pupils, both in discussions and in their own questionnaires, mostly agree that behaviour has improved and is good. The respect they show towards each other comes from an understanding that any form of bullying, including name-calling, is not to be tolerated. Pupils are proud to be school council members or to take on other posts of responsibility around the school. They say they feel safe, and their parents and carers agree that the school keeps them safe and that they behave well. The breakfast club provides a secure start to the day for those pupils who attend. Pupils are confident that adults will deal quickly and effectively with any concerns, but also say that they are able to sort things out for themselves, especially in dealing with minor incidents of name-calling.

Pupils whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable receive good care and support, and staff provide expert care and guidance. A small minority of parents and carers raised concerns about disruptive behaviour and bullying. Evidence from the inspection found that the school provides a safe and calm environment. 'My daughter is very happy at Saint Mary's and loves to learn.' This comment reflects the views of the vast majority of parents and carers who responded to the survey. Pupils understand how to recognise and manage risks, for example, those relating to internet safety. The school's emphasis on the importance of good attendance has been successful with attendance continuously above the national average.

## Leadership and management

The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and is focused firmly on improvement. Correct priorities for improvement have been identified and appropriate actions to correct weaknesses are being implemented adequately. The programme of professional development for staff, including performance management, is contributing effectively to improvements in teaching and in raising attainment, especially in mathematics. The headteacher takes on much of the responsibility for monitoring teaching and learning, which is managed soundly. While other senior leaders are developing their skills, they are not consistently involved in monitoring learning or other aspects of strategic leadership and management. As a result, there is an inconsistent approach to planning across the school and also to the development of pupils' handwriting and the presentation of their work. In spite of this, the sustained improvements over the past few years demonstrate that the school has a satisfactory capacity to sustain its improvement.

The curriculum complies with statutory requirements and meets pupils' needs satisfactorily. It is broad and balanced and a range of visits to places of interest and visitors to school enrich the curriculum. Work in subjects, such as geography, history, and science, while satisfactory, does not provide pupils with sufficient opportunities to consolidate and extend their writing skills, especially the more-able pupils. The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has many strengths. However, the promotion of pupils' multi-cultural development is not as strong.

The governing body provides good support to the headteacher and is keen for the school to do well. It provides a satisfactory level of challenge to the leadership. Safeguarding procedures comply with statutory requirements and keep pupils safe. All groups of pupils achieve satisfactorily because the school promotes equality of opportunity for all groups of pupils and tackles discrimination appropriately. Provision is allocated effectively to pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable and there are examples of some of these pupils making good progress.



## 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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**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.**



1 June 2012

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Morecambe, Morecambe, LA4 5PS**

Thank you for the very friendly welcome that you gave us when we inspected your school recently. It was good to see you enjoying your lessons so much. We really enjoyed our visit, especially talking with you. The pupils we spoke with are good ambassadors for your school. The inspectors agree with your school that you receive a satisfactory education. Older pupils told us how much they enjoy school and that they do not want to leave. It was a delight to see how much children in the Reception class enjoyed acting out the story of Billy Goat Gruff and how much the choir enjoys singing. You behave well, not just in lessons but around the school. We agree with you that everyone who works in the school takes very good care of you. You work hard in lessons and are polite. You told us that you feel safe in school.

We have asked your school to make sure that you make even better progress in your writing skills. Those of you who are potentially good at writing need challenging a bit more. You can help your teachers by remembering to use the skills you are being taught. We also want you to have more opportunities to write in the topic work you do. There is currently some good teaching but that is not the case in every class. We want your school to do all it can to make all teaching good or better so that the progress you make is good rather than satisfactory. You can help by making sure your work is neatly set out and by taking full notice of all that is said in lessons, and when teachers mark your work. Finally, we have asked your school to make sure that senior staff are more involved in leading the school further forward.

We hope you keep on working hard so you play a big part in trying to make your school even better. Also, please keep up your good attendance record!

Yours sincerely

Geoffrey Yates  
Lead inspector

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