

St Mary's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106930
Local authority	Rotherham
Inspection number	377493
Inspection dates	21–22 June 2012
Lead inspector	Andrew Clark

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	209
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Timothy Gillatt
Headteacher	Helen McLaughlin
Date of previous school inspection	9 January 2007
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Introduction

Inspection team

Andrew Clark
Michael Wintle

Additional Inspector
Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed seven teachers teaching 12 lessons or parts of lessons. Meetings were held with a group of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and school staff, including senior and middle leaders. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school development plan, records of pupils' progress, safeguarding and behaviour policies, and minutes of the governing body meetings. Parents' and carers' questionnaires were analysed from 57 responses, together with those completed by pupils and staff.

Information about the school

St Mary's is an average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The large majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils supported by School Action Plus or with statement of special educational needs is average. The school meets the current floor standards, which sets the government's minimum expectations for attainment and progress. Amongst the school's awards are Silver Arts Mark, Warwick University's Platinum Enterprise Award and Excellence in Community and Social Enterprise.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- This is a good school. It is not yet outstanding because teaching, although good, misses opportunities to deepen pupils' learning even further. The school is very involved in the life of the local and wider community and parents and carers hold it in high regard.
- All groups of pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, make good progress. Pupils reach above average standards in English and mathematics by Year 6 and there is a sustained trend of improvement. Pupils are confident and accurate readers. Their mathematical computation skills are good and they apply them well in problem-solving.
- The quality of teaching is good. It is based on staff's very good relationships with pupils and a secure knowledge of a wide range of teaching strategies. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to the effectiveness of teaching and learning. Very occasionally, teachers do not ensure that pupils present all their work to the highest standards.
- Pupils' behaviour and safety are outstanding. They are punctual and ready for work and attendance is above average. The pupils have an excellent understanding of different types of bullying and how to keep safe. They make a very good contribution to improving their own and others' well-being through, for example, the work of the school council and Human Rights group.
- The headteacher provides clear and assured leadership with good support from senior and middle leaders. Procedures to manage staff's performance and improve the quality of teaching and learning are good. The good governing body ensures that safeguarding procedures are effective. Staff, the governing body, pupils and parents and carers contribute well to accurate self-evaluation and school improvement. The outstanding curriculum and very good external partnerships promote pupils' excellent spiritual, moral social and cultural development extremely well.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching to deepen pupils' learning further by:
 - developing pupils' understanding of the levels they are working at in literacy and numeracy so they are clearer about how to improve
 - improving pupils' opportunities for self-assessment and to manage and improve their own work
 - ensuring high standards of presentation in all the work pupils undertake.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils of all abilities make good progress from their starting points. Parents and carers agree. Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills generally typical for their age. Children develop good social and learning skills which prepare them well for their future learning. Their early communication and number skills are quickly and systematically developed and children apply them well. They show curiosity and are keen to learn. As a result, there is a good trend of improving achievement and a narrowing of any gap between the achievements of different groups of children.

By the end of Year 6, standards are above average and pupils are well-prepared for their future learning. Throughout school pupils' progress in reading is good. Standards in reading are above average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 and there is a trend of rising standards for all groups of pupils. Pupils show a good and improving understanding of letters and sounds and how they are written. They respond well to a sharp focus on these skills and regular opportunities to practise them and read to adults. As a result, all groups, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, have good skills in decoding new words and reading with expression. Pupils of all abilities make clear choices about what to read and why. By Year 6, pupils, especially the more able, are adventurous in the books they read and have a mature comprehension of the inferences within the text. The content of the school library and positive guidance from all adults encourage these good choices.

Pupils develop good writing skills. They respond well to realistic writing contexts such as writing pamphlets on the lives of different animals following a farm visit in Year 2 or high-quality newspaper articles reflecting the events in Greek myths in the Year 5 Greek 'museum'. Pupils largely take good care to present their work well with accurate spelling and handwriting. Very occasionally, especially when note-taking or practising a new literacy skill, their presentation is not to the usual high standard. Pupils make good progress in mathematics and apply their knowledge systematically in problem-solving.

Pupils are positive about learning. They are increasingly involved in using precise targets and success criteria to help them improve. However, their ability to assess their own progress accurately is not yet consistent through the school and tends to be stronger in English than mathematics. Pupils make good use of information and communication technology (ICT) to develop their skills. Throughout school work of high quality was observed in music, design and technology and art.

Quality of teaching

Well-planned lessons pay good attention to the needs of all groups of learners and individual pupils. Teachers are motivated and ambitious for their pupils. They establish excellent relationships between adults and pupils. Their wide range of methods makes learning enjoyable and challenging. Pupils, parents and carers are rightly very positive about the quality of teaching and its impact on learning. There is a good balance between the direct teaching of literacy, numeracy and other learning skills and imaginative opportunities for pupils to apply them in real-life situations. Pupils' skills in persuasive writing are used successfully in writing letters to raise funds for world charities in Key Stage 2. Children in the reception class use their data-handling skills to produce graphs on different types of animals following a farm visit. Teachers generally expect pupils to apply their literacy and numeracy skills with care and accuracy, but very occasionally they do not ensure that all work is of this high standard.

Lessons are often fast-paced and lively. They are fully inclusive and staff ensure that all groups of pupils are supported sensitively and challenged appropriately. Teaching assistants make a good contribution through their skills, training and enthusiasm. Pupils often work in pairs, groups or individually. Staff plan small-group and individual activities to boost the learning of pupils who require it, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs or the more able. Teaching is sometimes outstanding. Teachers and teaching assistants make good use of open questions and well-informed questions to enrich pupils' learning. In the best lessons, teachers give pupils a very precise understanding of the levels they are working at and how they can improve and deepen their own learning. They reinforce this through effective marking and feedback. This approach is not yet consistently developed in all classes.

The quality of teaching promotes excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Teachers make very good use of pupils' speaking and drama skills to broaden their understanding and enrich their reading and writing. This culminates in high-quality performances such as the Year 3 performance of Macbeth and poetry written in the style of Shakespeare.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' behaviour is outstanding in and out of lessons. They have an excellent understanding of the teachers' high expectations and consistently meet them. They are deeply involved in establishing and supporting school rules through roles as play leaders and as school councillors or on the Human Rights committee. The school council produced its own questionnaire on school life and behaviour, analysed the outcomes and acted up on them. Busy playtimes are orderly and very well-managed. There is a wide range of physical and sporting activities and areas of quiet, peace and reflection. Incidents of poorer behaviour are very rare and are very well-managed and recorded. Key elements are the good training of lunchtime assistants and other non-teaching staff on behaviour management and child protection and all staff's commitment to the caring positive ethos. Attendance is above average for all groups of pupils. Parents and carers endorse this positive view of behaviour.

Pupils have an excellent understanding of the different types of bullying through high-quality assemblies and religious and personal and social education. Pupils explain clearly how staff guide them to make decisions for themselves about how to manage and respond to any

concerns about safety. The excellent partnership with the church and other organisations such as Fair Trade gives them excellent opportunities to consider ethical and moral issues. Pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties are carefully monitored and supported to improve and manage their own behaviour successfully.

Leadership and management

The ambitious and calm leadership of the headteacher is a key factor in moving the school forward. Staff morale is high and contributes significantly to the strong sense of community, high standards of care and good quality of teaching that parents and carers value. There are robust procedures to manage and improve the performance of all staff. The role of leaders and managers in robust monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning has improved well since the last inspection. The school makes good use of data from accurate assessment of pupils' progress to set increasingly precise and challenging targets. The good governing body is systematic and rigorous in monitoring all aspects of school life, providing a good balance of support and challenge to the school. This contributes well to accurate self-evaluation and good school development planning. The school promotes equality of opportunities for success and tackles rare examples of discrimination effectively. The school is successfully narrowing the achievement gap between the least able and the rest at all key stages of the school. Safeguarding procedures meet requirements and the school is proactive in ensuring all aspects of pupils' safety. The pupils' good achievement, their outstanding behaviour and safety and the effective quality of teaching ensure good capacity for improvement.

The school works with a very wide range of educational, community and faith partners to promote high-quality learning opportunities. The breadth and balance of the curriculum is outstanding. The headteacher and other staff have leading roles in developing the curriculum and leadership roles within the area. Highly-developed commitments to global and sustainable issues through its Rights and Responsibilities work and enterprise projects contribute to enriching the lives of pupils and their parents and carers through memorable learning experiences. There are opportunities to write and debate on ethical issues. Work on Macbeth led to consideration of whether it is ever right to take a life. The quality of music, particularly singing, art and sport is high as a result of very good use of teachers' specialist skills. Regular visits and visitors and a very wide range of extra-curricular activities and successful sporting events enrich pupils' learning and make an excellent contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

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).

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 up 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.



25 June 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Rotherham S65 2NU

Thank you for the friendly welcome you gave us when we inspected your school recently. We enjoyed visiting you in your lessons, at playtimes and in assembly. You go to a good school. These are some of the best things we found out about it.

- You achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics and reach above average standards.
- You enjoy your lessons because teachers make learning exciting and enjoyable.
- You produce good-quality work in many different subjects such as art, drama and music.
- The school's excellent curriculum helps you become very thoughtful, reflective and able to mix well with others. You are very well-prepared for your future learning.
- Your behaviour is outstanding and you know how to keep yourselves safe. You are very responsible and take your duties as play leaders, on the school council and Human Rights committee very seriously.

To help your school to improve further, we have asked your headteacher, staff and the governing body to make the teaching and learning even better by:

- ensuring that every lesson is the very best it can be by helping you become even more aware of your own progress and how you can improve it
- making sure you always present your work to the very best standard you can.

You can all help by always trying your best and continuing to enjoy school.

Yours sincerely,

Andrew Clark
Lead Inspector

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