

St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Edlington

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106773
Local authority	Doncaster
Inspection number	395732
Inspection dates	25–26 June 2012
Lead inspector	Jim Alexander

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	149
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Patrick O'Connor
Headteacher	Damien Thorpe
Date of previous school inspection	28 January 2008
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Introduction

Inspection team

Jim Alexander

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector observed eight lessons taught by six teachers. The inspector also listened to individual pupils read. Meetings were held with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. The inspector observed the school's work, looked at the documents relating to safeguarding, pupils' attainment and progress and the way in which the school evaluates its own performance. The inspector analysed the 68 questionnaire responses from parents and carers and took into account the views of staff and pupils.

Information about the school

This is a smaller than average-sized primary school. A large proportion of pupils are White British; the proportion from ethnic minority groups is smaller than average. The proportion of pupils supported by School Action Plus or with a statement of special educational needs is twice the national average. The number of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is above the national average. The school does not meet the current floor standard, which sets the government's minimum expectations for attainment and progress. Since the last inspection the school has managed a number of significant issues, including the long-term absence of the previous headteacher on compassionate grounds. In January 2012 a new headteacher was appointed and also a new co-ordinator for pupils supported by School action Plus or with a statement of special educational needs. In May 2012 a new mathematics subject leader and assessment co-ordinator was appointed.

During the time of the inspection Year 6 pupils were on a residential trip and the majority of the school community was out of school on the second day of the inspection, observing the Olympic torch pass through their community.

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	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	3

Key Findings

- This is a satisfactory school. It is not yet good because teaching and learning are not always good enough to promote consistently good progress in all year groups. Achievement remains higher in Key Stage 1 than it does in Key Stage 2. While leaders have taken steps to tackle these issues, actions are not fully embedded across the whole school. Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.
- Achievement is satisfactory overall. Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. In Key Stage 1 attainment has been on an upward trend in recent years, so that by the end of 2011 it was above average. This rising trend, however, has not been replicated by the end of Key Stage 2 and over time attainment has remained below average, representing only satisfactory progress from pupils' starting points.
- The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. It is much stronger in Key Stage 1 than in Key Stage 2. The vast majority of parents and carers view teaching as good, although a few commented about inconsistencies in provision in some year groups.
- Pupils enjoy school life and feel safe. They behave well and typically display positive attitudes to their work. Pupils in Key Stage 2 appreciate the efforts made by the school to make learning more relevant and consequently are behaving increasingly well in lessons.
- The management of performance and the leadership of teaching are satisfactory, and improving quickly. Leaders are successfully tackling areas of weakness and are focusing on the right priorities to bring improvement. The robust monitoring of these actions is at an early stage of implementation.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By July 2013, raise achievement across Key Stage 2 so that it is good or better by:
 - raising attainment in reading to match improvements made in writing this year
 - consolidating and building upon improvements in mathematics attainment
 - increasing the proportion of pupils gaining higher levels, particularly in mathematics.

- By July 2013, improve the quality of teaching in Key Stage 2 so that it is consistently good or better by:
 - ensuring that all teachers use assessment information to pitch work always at the right level for pupils of all abilities
 - sharing best practice to ensure that all teachers use marking effectively to help all pupils understand how to improve the quality of their work
 - limiting the time pupils spend listening to introductions at the start of lessons and move quickly on to independent work.

- Ensure that strategies are effective in raising achievement across Key Stage 2 by having leaders at all levels robustly monitor the impact of actions taken to improve outcomes.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Most children start school with skills that are typically well below those expected for their age, particularly in their language and communication skills. Children are helped to settle quickly into the Early Years Foundation Stage, relationships are positive and carefully-planned activities help them make good progress in their lessons. As a result, they are well prepared to start Year 1.

Attainment by the end of Year 2 has improved in the past two years and is now broadly average. In 2011 attainment rose again and was above average in reading, writing and mathematics. The number of pupils gaining the higher levels in these subjects was also above average. Pupils across Key Stage 1 continue to make good progress this year and benefit from lessons which provide opportunities for them to practise their skills across a wide range of subjects. As a result, the proportion of pupils working at age-related expectations remains above average in reading, writing and mathematics.

Achievement in Key Stage 2, however, has not kept pace with this improvement and remains satisfactory over time. Attainment is typically below average by the time pupils leave Year 6, representing satisfactory progress from their individual starting points. Due to a range of difficult factors, attainment in 2011 fell and was low in reading, writing and mathematics. Under the effective leadership of the new headteacher the school has acted swiftly to tackle areas of relative weakness.

Inspection found that across Key Stage 2 pupils' achievement is back on track and pupils are once again making at least satisfactory progress in their lessons. As a result of the school's focus this year, attainment in writing is now broadly average, and progress faster than in reading. Consequently, attainment in reading by the end of Year 6 remains below average. Rapid improvement has been made in the progress pupils make in their mathematics; while the proportion of pupils gaining the higher levels is increasing, it remains below average.

Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are supported to ensure that they make progress as good as others in their class. Pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, and those whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable, speak highly of the support they receive, which enables their progress to match that of others in the school.

Quality of teaching

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, but varies across the school. Typically it has been much stronger in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 than it has been in Key Stage 2. This is now changing and swift action taken by the recently-strengthened senior leadership team is ensuring that the quality of teaching in Year 3 to Year 6 is improving quickly. The vast majority of parents and carers view teaching as good, although some raised concern about its quality in some classes. Typically parents and carers say, 'The changes being introduced by the new headteacher are welcome and making a big difference', and 'My son has come on massively this year'.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, teachers and adults plan interesting activities both indoors and outside which are well-matched to children's differing abilities. They particularly enjoyed describing the experience of paddling their toes in cold water in a topic on the seaside. This good practice continues across Key Stage 1 and teachers work effectively to ensure that learning is both exciting and relevant. For example, pupils in a Year 2 class were reinforcing their mathematics skills by sorting and categorising photographs of their classmates. Teaching in Key Stage 2, while satisfactory overall, is improving quickly as staff respond to both the high expectations and also effective guidance provided by senior leaders.

In the best lessons teachers pitch the work so pupils of all abilities have tasks which challenge and engage them well. Sessions are brisk so pupils do not spend too long on any particular activity, and develop their skills in a range of independent tasks. Experienced teaching assistants are deployed successfully, understanding the aims of the lesson and taking a leading role in managing effective learning. Learning intentions are shared and teachers ensure that pupils know how to be successful. While some teaching remains satisfactory, none is inadequate. In satisfactory lessons work can occasionally be pitched too generally; as a result some more-able pupils find the work too easy. Pupils can also spend too long listening to lengthy introductions or extended question-and-answer sessions. This limits the time available for them to work independently. The quality of marking is varied across the school. There are some excellent examples of how effective guidance, acted upon quickly, helps improve pupils' writing very well. There are other examples where

marking acknowledges the effort pupils have made, but comments offer no guidance about what steps they need to take to improve their work.

Careful thought is given to the support disabled pupils and those with special educational needs receive, both in lessons and through tailored individual support sessions. The school works effectively to ensure that pupils' self-esteem is also fostered and recognises this is fundamental to their academic achievement. Throughout the school the impact of teaching on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is evident. For example, staff have good strategies to encourage pupils to manage their own behaviour well. Teachers also regularly encourage pupils' speaking and listening skills effectively, and this helps to develop their social skills through negotiating ideas together.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Parents and carers reflect pupils' positive views about behaviour and all say that their children are kept very safe in school. Behaviour is good and pupils are typically friendly, polite and supportive of one another. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are helped to settle quickly and soon make good friends; they play and learn well together. Generally pupils in Key Stage 1 have very good attitudes to their learning and this is increasing reflected across Key Stage 2. Pupils' obvious enjoyment in coming to school has resulted in attendance improving and now it is broadly average. The school has also taken effective steps to significantly reduce the high numbers of pupils who were persistently absent, which is now also in line with the national average. Pupils say they get on well together and have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, for example through wise use of the Internet. They say that incidents of any form of bullying are very rare and any name-calling is very quickly tackled. Pupils with identified behavioural difficulties are increasingly well-supported and improve their social skills, ensuring that they do not disturb the learning of others.

Leadership and management

The school has faced a number of very difficult situations over the past 18 months and this has caused the effectiveness of leadership and management over time to be satisfactory. However, the new leadership team demonstrates that it has the capacity to improve and initiatives are already bringing benefits. For example, attendance has improved considerably and persistent absence fallen significantly. Teamwork is strong and staff are working together well to ensure that initiatives are having a positive effect on pupils' achievement, especially in Key Stage 2. The headteacher has greatly improved the use of performance data and this means that there is now a much quicker response to any dips in pupils' attainment. The majority of teachers are now using this information to plan work that better meets the needs of all pupils within their class, although some variation still remains. Self-evaluation is accurate and is used successfully to ensure that development planning focuses on the most important priorities. However, the rigorous monitoring of actions taken is at an earlier stage of development.

Teachers' performance management, as well as access to training courses, has helped to increase the amount of good teaching. The role of middle leaders has also been strengthened through the appointment of new staff.

The governing body is kept well-informed; it steered the school with a steady hand through recent difficulties. It is providing increasingly effective challenge and support to the school and ensures that safeguarding arrangements are met. The school promotes equality of opportunities and tackles discrimination competently. Pupils from different backgrounds get on well together and the school is doing the right things to eliminate the remaining unevenness in learning and progress between classes. The curriculum is broad and balanced and promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development successfully.

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.



27 June 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Edlington, Doncaster, DN12 1DL

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave me when I inspected your school recently. I am writing to you to say what I found out about your school. You are obviously proud of your school and expressed your views clearly. Thank you for also taking time to complete the questionnaire. I really enjoyed talking with you and listening to some of you read. You told me how much you like coming to school. This explains why your attendance is improving so quickly and that many of you never miss a day. Well done!

You go to a satisfactory school, which is a safe and fun place to be. Everyone takes good care of you and I was particularly pleased to see how well you behave in lessons and around the school. I was also really impressed with how well you look after one another and encourage your friends to do their best in lessons. Over time, the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 have improved much more quickly than Key Stage 2. I know one class has had a number of different teachers this year. I also know that with the arrival of your new headteacher things are much more settled and many of you are once again making much faster progress.

Your school's leaders are doing the right things to make it even better and are clear about what is still not yet good enough. I have asked them to keep a careful eye on improvements in teaching so that achievement rises by the time you leave school in Year 6.

I wish you every success in your future.

Yours sincerely,

Jim Alexander
Lead Inspector

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