



# St Mary's RC Voluntary Aided Primary School

Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 108722  
**LEA** South Tyneside  
**Inspection number** 278034  
**Inspection dates** 13 June 2006 to 14 June 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Mrs Moira Fitzpatrick

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Ayr Drive
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided		Jarrow
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11		Tyne and Wear, NE32 4AW
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	0191 4898336
<b>Number on roll</b>	238	<b>Fax number</b>	0191 4898338
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Father Paul Tully
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	1 October 1999	<b>Headteacher</b>	Miss Maria Elliott

<b>Age group</b> 3 to 11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 13 June 2006 - 14 June 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 278034
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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

This average sized school serves an area to the south east of Jarrow town centre that has a high level of social deprivation. Although it is a Roman Catholic school, about one third of its pupils are from non-Catholic families. Nearly all pupils are White British and none speak English as an additional language. The attainment of children when they join the Nursery vary each year and are currently below what is typical for three year olds, especially in their speech and language development. The school has the same proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities as most schools, and currently has a very low number of pupils with a statement of special educational need. The school has very strong links with the parish and the community and offers family learning and adult education courses during term time. It is currently preparing to open a children's centre in the autumn term, which will extend provision for children from birth to three years.

## **Key for inspection grades**

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Inspectors agree with the school that its current effectiveness is satisfactory and that it gives satisfactory value for money. It possesses some strong features and is improving rapidly this year because of its commitment to raising standards. Pupils reach broadly average standards by Year 6 and their achievement is satisfactory, reflecting the satisfactory quality of teaching and learning in the school. There has been effective action taken this year to improve standards, though these have not yet had time to impact on standards throughout the school. Further improvements in teaching are needed to ensure that all pupils achieve well and make good progress. Curriculum, care and guidance are good, promoting pupils' confidence, independence and care for each other. Provision and standards in the Foundation Stage are satisfactory overall, and are good in the Nursery, where children make a good start to their education.

Recent changes in the school's senior management team have led to significant improvement in links with parents, the parish and external partners, all of whom now play a positive part in supporting the work of the school. Leadership and management are satisfactory and improving well under the very good leadership of the headteacher who has given clear direction and a good impetus to improving the school. Subject leaders so far have not been fully involved in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school. The school has good plans in place to begin their involvement in the next school year. Governors, staff and parents are fully committed to the planned changes and all welcome the opportunity to play a part. The school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection and is well placed to continue to improve.

### What the school should do to improve further

Focus on:

- improving teaching and learning so that pupils' progress is good throughout the school
- improving teachers' use of assessment to ensure that pupils of all abilities are well challenged
- involving subject leaders in reviewing and improving the work of the school.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Standards in English, mathematics and science are broadly average by Year 6 and pupils make steady progress overall from their starting points in Year 1. Last year, the performance of Year 6 pupils in the national tests showed that their progress in English was unsatisfactory, even though average standards were attained. In mathematics and science, pupils achieved satisfactorily and reached average standards. The school has responded to underachievement in writing with initiatives and additional support for pupils, which have led to improved standards, especially in Years 2 and 6. The targets set for the current Year 6 are lower

than last year's, which reflects the much lower attainment of these pupils at the end of Year 2. However, the school's tracking data indicates that some have made better than expected progress in writing because of action taken by the school earlier this year. The recent decline in standards at the end of Year 2 has been arrested. Pupils in Year 2 are now working close to national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. As a result of recent initiatives, many pupils have made better than expected progress from their starting points in Year 1. Those pupils now in Year 3 who had underachieved last year are now making satisfactory progress and making up lost ground as a result of additional support the school has provided. Most children in the Foundation Stage reach the goals set for their learning by the end of Reception and they have made satisfactory progress. Pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported sufficiently to make the same progress as their peers.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils are very happy at school because they feel safe and well cared for, as one pupil said, 'Every morning I wake up so glad I'm coming to school.' The personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good because they make the best of the many activities the school has to offer, and eagerly seize opportunities to take responsibility. Behaviour is good throughout the school because rules are explained well and pupils respect themselves, each other and their teachers. They show their enjoyment of learning by listening closely in lessons and concentrating well on tasks they are given. Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of each other's rights to feel safe and happy in school. Many spoke with enthusiasm of the 'respect week' that took place earlier in the term. The recently formed school council provides good opportunities for pupils to make a contribution to improving the school and have made many changes this year; for example, the improvement of playground facilities. By Year 6, pupils are mature, sensible and relish taking on the responsibility of caring for younger children or helping with the running of the school.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching and learning are satisfactory and have a number of strengths to build on. Good lessons were seen during the inspection, and there were good features in most lessons. Teachers have good subject knowledge and explain new ideas clearly. Most lessons are securely planned and teachers expect pupils to concentrate and work hard; pupils respond well to these expectations. However, weaknesses in some lessons prevent pupils making the best progress they could. In those lessons, concentration and behaviour dip because the pace is too slow and for some, the work is too easy and not challenging enough. Sometimes pupils sit listening for too long. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported by teaching assistants so that in most classes they succeed with tasks that are adapted to their needs.

Teaching is consistently good in the Nursery and Years 2 and 6. Lessons are exciting and purposeful, and pupils are clear about what they have to learn and how to succeed. Teachers think on their feet and go beyond what is planned when they can. The school has introduced good assessment systems to monitor how well each pupil is doing. These are working well in giving a whole-school picture of pupils' progress. However, the information is not always used as well as it could be for lesson planning.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The good curriculum meets all requirements. It is good in the Nursery, where activities are well matched to children's needs and interests. At the moment, provision in the Reception class is not of the same quality as the Nursery, but is satisfactory overall. This year, the new leadership team have improved and extended the curriculum in the rest of the school to make sure that it is more creative and meets the needs of all learners. For example, thorough analysis of assessment results produces curriculum targets which help teachers deal with the weaker areas in literacy and numeracy. This is part of the school's determined drive to raise standards.

The school has a good range of clubs that are popular and valued by parents and pupils. Recent additions include penny whistle classes, samba music sessions and French. The curriculum is further enriched by regular visits and visitors and the older pupils go on an exciting residential trip. The school has productive links with other schools and local organisations to extend pupils' learning and make better provision for the more able and talented pupils.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The school's care for pupils is good. Procedures are in place for the health and well-being of pupils and for child protection. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive good quality support from teaching assistants who know them well. The school's good links with external agencies have improved this year and ensures that pupils who need specialist support have their needs well met. Pupils have every confidence that their teachers will quickly sort out problems and parents agree. Parents are delighted with the strong, supportive relationships that exist at all levels in the school. Pupils are well guided to make sensible decisions about their behaviour by teachers and teaching assistants who take care to positively support these aspects of pupils' development. The school's systems for monitoring pupils' progress are being further developed this year with the introduction of clearer targets and the involvement of pupils in evaluating their own learning.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The school is improving at a good rate under the very good leadership of the recently appointed headteacher who has

a very clear vision for what the school can achieve. She has skilfully developed a strong team spirit and sense of direction for staff and is ambitious for pupils to achieve well. This year, the strong interim senior management team have made a good contribution to stabilising the school and have ensured that standards are improving in writing and problem-solving. Through regular, well planned monitoring and evaluation activities, the school can gather a clear picture of its strengths and weaknesses. The headteacher has correctly identified the implementation of subject leader accountability as a priority for the coming year. While governors give good support to the school, they are also developing their role as critical friends and developing ways of finding out about the school from first hand observations. The school has developed very strong links with parents and other partners to enhance provision and enlist support for pupils' learning. Parents are pleased to have the opportunity to contribute to the school's improvement and are delighted with the welcome they receive from the new headteacher. Although the school has made good progress in improving standards and identifying priorities, overall, improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Given the rate of progress this year, the quality of improvement planning and the high commitment of staff and governors, the school is well placed to continue to improve.

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## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	3	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2	NA

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

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The Pupils

St Mary's RC Voluntary Aided Primary School

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15 June 2006

Dear Pupils

Thank you all very much for the friendly welcome you gave us during our visit. You looked after us very well. You told us many things that you like about your school and about the work you do and how much it has improved in the last year. We were very glad to hear these things.

We especially liked the way you behave well in and out of class and help each other to work hard and learn well. This makes school a happy place for everyone and we could feel that happiness coming through. It was lovely to see you playing together in the sunshine and enjoying those lovely games and toys. We hope that your plans for more playground equipment will happen soon. Another nice thing about your playground was the way so many of you had responsibilities for looking after other children or equipment. You did this very well, so that children felt safe and included. Well done!

We thought that what you said about how well your teachers looked after you showed that you have mature attitudes and understand about the nice things people do. Your praise notes in the school hall were lovely to read. We are very glad that your parents agree that you are well cared for and looked after in school. It is good to hear how happy you are about coming to school, as one pupil said, 'I feel like it is a second home here.'

To help your school get even better, we have asked your headteacher and teachers to make a few changes to how you learn so that you make even better progress all of the time. These include, making sure that you all have work that is matched to your varying needs.

We thank you again for making our visit so pleasurable and send you our good wishes for a very happy end to the school year. Enjoy your holidays!

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Moira Fitzpatrick

Lead Inspector