



St Mary's Catholic Primary

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 112898
LEA DERBYSHIRE LEA
Inspection number 279050
Inspection dates 20 October 2005 to 21 October 2005
Reporting inspector Mr. George Derby LI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Cross Street
School category	Voluntary aided		S40 4ST
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01246 232 170
Number on roll	444	Fax number	01246232170
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr. Paul McGinley
Date of previous inspection	6 November 2000	Headteacher	Mrs. J Marion Bolton

Age group 4 to 11	Inspection dates 20 October 2005 - 21 October 2005	Inspection number 279050
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors. A child care inspector inspected the privately run care provision which takes place outside school hours. This is reported separately.

Description of the school

This large school, located near the town centre, serves four parishes. Pupils, therefore, come from a wide area. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, with special educational needs and from minority ethnic groups is well below average. The children enter the school with skills, knowledge and understanding which are generally typical of their age. The school's Catholic ethos is reflected in its mission statement, 'Let your light shine'.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a school which does let its pupils' 'light shine'. Led well by the headteacher and supported by a highly competent deputy headteacher, it is an effective school. Pupils make good academic progress from the start of their school life. Inspection judgements agree with the school's own view of its strengths and weaknesses. Through effective work in the Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1, the pupils achieve well. Pupils mainly build on their skills and improve standards in Key Stage 2. However, variation in teaching at this stage means that some work does not always stretch the most able pupils. The school's strong Catholic ethos results in pupils being highly valued, well cared for and well prepared for their next school. Behaviour is excellent and pupils thoroughly enjoy their time at school. They listen intently to their enthusiastic and hardworking teachers who mostly teach them well and enable them to learn effectively. The school has rightly identified that more use could be made of computers to aid learning. Parents think highly of the school and much appreciate what staff do for their children. There is a strong commitment from senior staff to 'get things right' and to aid improvement. The ability of senior staff to do this is good. Some staff are relatively new to their roles but already many are forging ahead with plans to accelerate development and improve quality further. Occasionally, the checking on whether the school is achieving what it sets out to do is not rigorous enough. However, where it does focus its efforts, the outcomes are often very good. Although the school has sound, basic, systems for tracking how well pupils are doing, it does not always make full use of all the information at its disposal. Consequently, improvement from the last inspection is only satisfactory. In addition, although attainment is generally high, pupils do better at some subjects than others. Overall, the school provides good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Strengthen assessment and monitoring systems to ensure pupils make good progress in all subjects. - Provide harder work for the most able pupils. - Make better use of information and communication technology (ICT) in classrooms to support teaching and pupils' learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

All pupils, including those with learning difficulties and from minority ethnic groups, achieve well from their starting points and reach standards which are generally above average, and occasionally high, by the time they reach Year 6. By the end of Reception, the pupils mostly reach above average standards. This good progress is because the staff know the pupils' needs well and plan work which is exciting and challenging. During Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils build on their previous work and maintain good standards, supported by effective teaching which ensures that work is appropriately matched to their abilities. Overall, the pupils have attained above or well above average

standards for the past five years in both key stages. The school has recognised, and has mostly dealt with, occasional variation in standards between subjects. For instance, the school's push on English has really paid off, especially with regard to writing where standards are consistently high. The concentrated effort on improving science teaching and pupils' opportunities in 2004 led to high attainment in the Year 6 tests. Attainment and progress in mathematics have been more variable in the past few years. The reasons have been identified and effectively addressed and the school is now implementing a number of additional measures to raise attainment further. Challenging targets have been largely met and sometimes exceeded in English. However, in mathematics these have not been achieved in recent years, especially at the higher level.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well being is good. Behaviour is excellent and the school is a very quiet and orderly environment because of the staff's consistently high expectations. Pupils value the rewards they receive for good work and behaviour. Children in the reception classes settle in quickly and make a good start. Pupils of all ages are enthusiastic and interested and they are keen to take on special responsibilities such as being school councillors and monitors. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory. Pupils thoroughly enjoy working and playing together and are very mature. They care for each other and feel safe and secure. Pupils have good awareness of a healthy lifestyle because of the good opportunities for participation in sports and the school's healthy eating programme. Overall the school provides well for pupil's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils reflect extremely well on a wide range of aspects of school life and the wider world. The tranquil setting of the school's attractive gardens contributes well to their spiritual development. They learn to value the diversity of a multicultural society through music, religious topics such as the Hindu Festival of Light and Judaism. However, there are missed opportunities to prepare pupils for life in a multicultural society through displays in the school. The close links with the community and parish help to promote pupil's awareness of the wider world.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. The best teaching seen during the inspection was in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 where it was consistently good. Elsewhere, it is never less than satisfactory. The good quality is principally because the work in English, mathematics and science is very well planned. Teachers regularly evaluate how good their teaching is and strive to improve it. Assessment is frequently built in to lessons so that staff know how well the pupils are doing and adjust work where necessary. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly but overall, there are few comments which identify what they need to do to improve or to set short-term targets for

development. Staff match activities satisfactorily to the different ability groups in their classes. Planning and assessments are not sufficiently sharp, to precisely identify what pupils at every level should learn. Teachers generally have a lively approach which, coupled with the interesting activities, motivates the pupils and spurs them on to try harder. Where teaching is satisfactory, too much time is spent by the teacher talking rather than the pupils working and not enough challenge is provided for a few pupils who find the work easy. Teachers are beginning to make good use of their newly installed interactive whiteboards and this is enlivening teaching. The work of teaching assistants is good; they generally make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school has an adequate curriculum which provides all subjects that the pupils are required to learn. Pupils who have learning difficulties or disabilities are well catered for, enabling them to make similar progress as other pupils. A good start has been made to extending the curriculum in Years 5 and 6. Effective links between subjects, aimed at developing pupils' skills and creativity, are now being planned. Provision for ICT as a subject is now satisfactory; however, the school does not use computers sufficiently well to support pupils' learning in other subjects or in lessons. There is a good focus on developing safe and healthy lifestyles, for example, through an effective personal, social and health education programme which involves visitors, such as the nurse. Good opportunities for physical activity at break times and a wide range of extra-curricular activities, particularly sport, help the pupils to maintain a healthy lifestyle. A high proportion of pupils are actively involved and they get great enjoyment from this programme.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school's care and support for pupils is good. There are good arrangements to ensure that every child's welfare is safeguarded and their personal development promoted. Pupils learn in a supportive environment, which helps them to develop well and make good progress. The staff provide good support in classrooms for pupils who need extra help so that they are able to make equally good progress through their sound individual education plans and personal targets. Pupils feel safe in school because of very good relationships with their teachers and with each other. The school has suitable arrangements for the protection of children. A sound assessment system enables the school to track pupils' progress and set targets in English and mathematics. Good assessment in English has resulted in targets set for pupils which have helped to raise standards. Other subjects are assessed regularly as part of the topic and pupils are regularly involved in assessing their own achievements. They are well aware of what they have achieved and what they need to do to make further progress. The school is building a database of information from tests and assessments and has information from external sources. The information, which would let the school rigorously evaluate all pupils' progress, is not yet fully used.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership and management are good. The headteacher and deputy headteacher complement each other very well. The well organised, able and effective senior management team are dedicated to raising standards. They are clearly able to take the school forward. A generally effective and very hardworking staff team has been created and their enthusiasm rubs off on the pupils. The pupils' personal development and skills are of high priority. The headteacher has created an ethos where every child matters. Monitoring of the quality of teaching is effective, ensuring a high proportion of good teaching. The school works hard, and is successful at, ensuring all pupils are satisfactorily included in every activity. There is a good knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses and a clear view of what needs to be done. However, checking on how effective development planning objectives are implemented is largely informal. Work to raise standards in English and science has been effective and led well. The school is now putting procedures in place in mathematics to strengthen pupils' attainment and to ensure consistency in teaching, learning and progress across all subjects. Governance is satisfactory. Governors are led by a knowledgeable chair who is not afraid to challenge the senior management team but who also is effective in the way he supports the school. However, while governors receive information about standards they do not challenge the school's performance rigorously enough.

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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>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	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	2	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

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	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	2	NA

The quality of provision

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

¹ 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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	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	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	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

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
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
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
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
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
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
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
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

The inspection team thoroughly enjoyed its time at your school. Thank you for making us very welcome. We think you have a very happy school. A special thanks to those who talked with us. We liked the following: - You behave excellently and look after one another very well. - By Year 6 you are very mature, sensible, and show great compassion for others. - You work very hard and really enjoy school. - You value highly what the staff do for you and think they support you very well - Your work in English is very good and overall you make good progress through the school; you do not always do as well as this in mathematics. - The school gardens give you lots of opportunities to think and reflect on life. - The staff show how much they appreciate your efforts by the displays around the school; sometimes, though, they could show more about life in different cultures. There are a few things the school needs to do but we think that the headteacher, all the staff and governors will work hard to do these: - The staff can make even better use of the information they have about your achievements and about the work in school generally to help you make more progress. - At times, the work could be a bit harder for a few pupils. - We think that lessons would be even more exciting, and that you would learn even better, if you were able to make more use of computers.