



# St Mary's Catholic First School, Wool

Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 113824  
**LEA** Dorset  
**Inspection number** 279259  
**Inspection dates** 10 July 2006 to 10 July 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Jacqueline Ikin AI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	First	<b>School address</b>	Folly Lane
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided		Wool
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5 to 9		Wareham, Dorset BH20 6DS
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01929 462565
<b>Number on roll</b>	87	<b>Fax number</b>	01929 462565
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mrs Elizabeth Baker
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	27 November 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs M E Barker

<b>Age group</b> 5 to 9	<b>Inspection dates</b> 10 July 2006 - 10 July 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 279259
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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

St. Mary's Roman Catholic First School is a small village school. Most pupils come from White British backgrounds. A very small minority come from other mixed backgrounds and two speak English as an additional language. A below average number of pupils are eligible for free school meals. The number of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is broadly average. Many pupils come from army families and enter and leave the school part way through the school year. There have been many recent changes in the school, including several new staff and significant extensions to the accommodation. The governors have had difficulty in appointing a permanent headteacher and at the time of the inspection, the acting headteacher had been in post for just over a year.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school which provides a sound education and good standard of care for its pupils. It gives satisfactory value for money. The school's own view of its effectiveness accurately reflects that of the inspection team. Standards and achievement are satisfactory and beginning to improve as a result of the good leadership of the acting headteacher. Most pupils achieve well in reading but some more able pupils do not achieve as much as they should in writing and mathematics. Sound leadership and management overall have led to satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. Monitoring and evaluation are satisfactory although there is not yet enough emphasis on measuring the impact of the school's work on pupils' achievement. In addition, the role of governors and new subject leaders in monitoring and evaluation is under-developed. Teaching and learning are all satisfactory but the use of assessment to set challenging targets and plan work for pupils of different capabilities is not precise enough. The curriculum is satisfactory, with good provision for after-school activities. The quality of provision and standards in the Reception class is sound. Pupils' personal development is fostered well. The school has very good links with the church community and parents. Its capacity to improve is satisfactory.

### What the school should do to improve further

- improve the achievement of more able pupils in mathematics and writing, making more precise use of assessment to set challenging targets and plan the next steps in learning
- ensure that there is a greater emphasis on monitoring the impact of the school's work on pupils' achievement
- improve the role of the subject leaders and governors in monitoring the work of the school.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

Standards and achievement are satisfactory. Standards on entry to the school are average overall. Children make sound progress in their Reception Year and achieve broadly average standards by the time they reach Year 1. Standards in Years 1 to 4 fluctuate from year to year depending on the numbers of pupils who start and leave the school part-way through a school year, the different proportions of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities, and the number of more able pupils in each year group. However, there is a slowly rising trend and standards are above average in reading. In writing, mathematics and science, they are average. This represents good achievement in reading and satisfactory achievement overall in relation to pupils' starting points. Most pupils reach the targets that are set for them but these targets are not always challenging enough for more able pupils. More pupils are now attaining the higher levels in reading but more able do not always achieve as much as they should in writing and mathematics. The school is aware of this and knows that more

remains to be done. Most pupils reach the standards expected in information and communication technology (ICT) but few achieve above this because the school has not had an ICT suite until relatively recently. Most pupils who join the school part way through the school year make satisfactory progress. The achievement of pupils who speak English as an additional language is similar that of to their classmates. The achievement of most pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is satisfactory. However, those with the most severe disabilities achieve well as a result of the good support they receive. Pupils who are talented and gifted make satisfactory progress. Boys' achievement is similar to that of girls.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development and well-being is good. They enjoy school and most have positive attitudes to learning. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. A strong commitment to the Catholic faith underpins pupils' spiritual and moral development. Behaviour is good and pupils are very welcoming to newcomers. They are well prepared for life in a culturally diverse society through the very positive approach that the school takes to people of different faiths. This is a good improvement since the last inspection. Older pupils contribute well to the school community, for example through their work as 'red hats' when they help resolve disputes in the playground. They make a very good contribution to the wider community through their links with the church and parish, and demonstrate a genuine concern for the needs of others through their charity work. The wide range of clubs and school visits promotes good team-building and social skills. Pupils develop a good understanding of healthy lifestyles and of how to keep themselves safe. They are soundly prepared for their future economic well-being. Attendance is good.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The well-structured approach to the teaching of reading, including regular opportunities for pupils to read books together under the guidance of teachers and teaching assistants, has contributed to this. Teachers use a good range of methods to make learning interesting. For example, paired discussions in a Year 4 literacy lesson successfully helped pupils to consolidate their understanding of how to use paragraphs when writing a story. Good use of the new interactive whiteboards enlivens teachers' explanations and contributes well to pupils' learning. Planning and assessment are satisfactory overall but their effectiveness in raising the achievement of more able pupils in mathematics and writing is variable. Assessment is not always used to set targets that are challenging enough or to plan precisely for the next steps in pupils' learning. Teaching assistants give satisfactory support to most pupils and good support to those who have the most severe learning

difficulties or disabilities. Good use is made of the local authority advisory service to ensure that the needs of pupils who speak English as an additional language are met.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

The school's planning provides a satisfactory range of learning opportunities to meet the interests and academic development of most pupils, including those with learning difficulties or disabilities, those who are talented and gifted and those who speak English as an additional language. However, the needs of pupils who are more able are not always met in mathematics and writing. The curriculum is enriched well by visits, visitors and a good range of after-school activities. The impact is seen in pupils' positive attitudes towards school. A good range of health education activities is effective in promoting pupils' positive attitudes towards nutrition, fitness and safety. The recent improvements to the school's accommodation and resources have helped to improve the curriculum. A good example is the computer suite, which is enabling pupils to catch up on their ICT skills. Children in the Reception class are provided with a sound range of experiences which reflect their needs in all areas of learning.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Care, guidance and support for pupils are good. The school provides a high level of pastoral care and support, and sound educational guidance. There are good arrangements for ensuring pupils' health, safety and welfare, with regular safety checks and good child protection procedures in place. Parents and pupils report that children are well supported when they experience personal difficulties. The school council and circle times are used well to enable pupils to raise their own personal concerns. The school works successfully with outside agencies to support pupils who need their help. Induction procedures are good. They include a weekly 'Preppie' group which meets in the term before the children start school. Parents and their children visit the school to meet each other and members of the school community and get to know how the school works. Both parents and pupils say that it helps them to feel part of the school 'family'. Good links with local schools, including the local Catholic schools, prepare pupils well for moving on to their middle school education. There are also good arrangements for ensuring the appropriate information is sent with the pupils when they move to other schools before the end of Year 4. The very good links with parents and the church make a significant contribution to the pastoral care, guidance and support that pupils receive.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The acting headteacher has done a good job in providing stability during a period of many staff changes. She has given purpose and direction to the school's work and the governors and acting

senior teacher have given her good support in this. She has successfully won the confidence of staff and parents. During the inspection, they all commented on how well she had 'held the school together' over the past year. She has an accurate picture of the strengths of the school and where improvements are needed. Good induction procedures for new members of staff, together with the school's welcoming atmosphere, have led to a strong sense of teamwork and a commitment to school improvement. This has made a significant contribution to the improved standards in reading. The initiatives that have been implemented have begun to move the school forward in other areas, such as in ICT, but they have not yet had time to be fully effective. Monitoring and evaluation is satisfactory overall. However, monitoring does not focus enough on the impact of the school's work on pupils' achievement and governors are not involved as much as they should be in the process. The views of parents are taken into account wherever possible. For example, the school's provision of a wider range of after-school activities is a response to parents' requests. Most subject leaders are new in the job and their roles in monitoring and evaluation are not yet sufficiently developed. Finances are soundly managed and the school gives satisfactory value for money. The school's capacity to improve is satisfactory.

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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	2	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	2	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>	3	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**

Thank you for making us feel so welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you and watching you learn and play. We can see why you like your school and think that it gives you a sound education.

What we liked about your school:

we think that your school looks after you well and encourages you to be confident

you reach good standards in reading

you behave well and learn and play well together

your acting headteacher has worked hard to make sure that the many recent staff changes in the school have not stopped you learning

your teachers make lessons interesting for you

you have lots of activities after school to help you to learn.

What we think needs to be improved:

the way the school plans work and sets targets for those of you who are good at mathematics and writing to help you to reach even higher standards

the methods the school uses to check how well it is helping you to make progress.

Yours sincerely

Jacqueline Ikin Lead inspector