



St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Evesham

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 116878
LEA Worcestershire
Inspection number 279930
Inspection dates 30 November 2005 to 1 December 2005
Reporting inspector Ceri Morgan HMI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	High Street
School category	Voluntary aided		Evesham
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Worcestershire WR11 4EJ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01386 446748
Number on roll	160	Fax number	01386 446748
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs K Buckley
Date of previous inspection	17 November 2003	Headteacher	Mrs Frances Abela

Age group 4 to 11	Inspection dates 30 November 2005 - 1 December 2005	Inspection number 279930
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

St Mary's Catholic Primary School is a smaller than average primary school in the centre of Evesham. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is very low and the number of those who have learning difficulties is below average. The number of pupils from minority ethnic groups is low and there are few pupils whose first language is not English. The school was judged to have serious weaknesses in the inspection of November 2003. The school has had significant staff changes since the previous inspection.

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 good school. There has been significant progress in all areas since the last inspection. The capacity to improve further is good, and the school provides good value for money.

Good teaching and a rich curriculum ensure that children in the Foundation Stage progress well and reach above average standards by the end of their reception year. As a result of effective teaching, pupils now also make good progress in all year groups, but particularly in Years 1 and 2, where they are reaching well above average standards in English, science and mathematics. However, improvements have not yet had a full impact on the standards reached by Year 6; whilst they are above average overall, higher attainers are not yet doing as well as they can in writing. The pupils' personal development is good and they show a thirst for learning that contributes significantly to their progress. Pupils respond in a lively and enthusiastic way to challenging tasks.

The leadership and management of the headteacher are good; an effective leadership team has been established that is well aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Senior managers promote high standards of teaching and achievement. They have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and monitor progress well, albeit informally at times. Although the governors are supportive, they are not yet sufficiently challenging the school's performance.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the standard of writing for more able pupils.
- Ensure the governing body provides sufficient challenge regarding standards and financial decision making.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards have improved since 2004 and are now above average overall, although the performance of girls is slightly better than that of boys, especially in writing. In the national tests for 11 year olds in 2005, almost half of the pupils reached scores in mathematics and reading that were higher than the expected Level 4. In Year 2, almost two thirds of the pupils achieved the higher Level 3 in reading. However, no pupils in Year 6 attained the higher Level 5 in writing and the school rightly sees this as a priority for the future.

Pupils now make good progress in each year group. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Children start school with above average standards. In the Foundation Stage, they are well prepared for their subsequent education and achieve well. In Years 1 and 2, this good progress is now leading to high attainment in national tests, and the school met or exceeded its 2005 performance targets for 11 year olds. Appropriate targets have been agreed for 2006. The school works hard to support the few pupils whose first language is not English and progress for this group is good.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is very good. They speak very highly of their school, and their good attendance shows how much they enjoy learning. They feel safe because bullying is not tolerated and all adults treat them with respect. Pupils work hard and relish the success that the good teaching gives them.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. In particular, the school's motto, 'Through God's love we will achieve', is an accurate picture of how the school links learning very closely with the pupils' spiritual development.

Pupils clearly understand the need to stay healthy. They participate well in a wide range of healthy lifestyle activities and speak very knowledgeably about the value of fruit and vegetables in a good diet. They know the dangers of the misuse of drugs and alcohol.

Most pupils behave very well. Occasionally, however, a few pupils, mostly boys, take a while to settle and find it hard to work without constant supervision. Pupils enjoy the contributions they make to the life of the school. The school council, for example, takes its responsibilities very seriously and has made some significant improvements in the provision of play equipment in the playground.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good. As a result, standards have risen since the last inspection, especially in Years 1 and 2 where the improvements have been most marked. Teachers generally have high expectations of pupils' work but do not always plan enough activities to encourage extended writing either in English or other subjects, and this helps to explain why few of them attain high levels in writing by age 11.

Teachers give pupils plenty of opportunities to work independently and they do this well, especially the more able groups. They are very good at making lessons fun by using exciting resources, and pupils say they enjoy learning. This is especially the case in Years 1 and 2, and some outstanding teaching was seen during the inspection when pupils worked quickly and with enjoyment.

Teachers assess pupils' work regularly and accurately. They use this information to set challenging but achievable targets. This helps pupils know how well they are doing and how they can improve.

The very good partnership between teachers and teaching assistants ensures that in many lessons pupils who need help are supported very well in their learning. This works particularly well for pupils who speak English as an additional language, who are given every opportunity to learn at the same rate as their classmates.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Curriculum organisation is effective. Good planning makes learning interesting and ensures that pupils build well on their previous learning. This explains why pupils who have learning difficulties make rapid progress, especially in their basic reading and number skills.

The Foundation Stage curriculum is very good, and provides a stimulating start to school with a wide variety of exciting and challenging activities.

The school makes very good use of visits and visitors to enhance the curriculum. The very well planned residential visits make subjects like history and geography come to life and do much to develop pupils' personal skills.

The school has improved the curriculum for information and communication technology (ICT) since the last inspection and pupils speak highly of the impact that computers have, both on their learning and their enjoyment of lessons. A good range of extra-curricular activities is available for children of all ages.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school looks after the children very well. Health and safety procedures are very thorough and staff make detailed assessments of risks before taking pupils out of school. Child protection systems are in place and staff have a good awareness of what to do if they feel that a pupil is at risk. However, no current staff member has had the benefit of recent training. Pupils are quick to say how safe they feel at school and all know who to see if they have worries.

Teachers involve pupils well in setting targets and helping them to understand what is needed to achieve them. The care and support of children in the Foundation Stage are very good. They are soon taught how to dress and look after themselves and start to learn the rules about good behaviour and caring for others.

The good teaching of basic literacy, numeracy and ICT skills and the many opportunities for pupils to take responsibility ensure that they are prepared well for their life beyond school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher brings vision and coordination to the work of senior managers. She has secured a strong school ethos with an emphasis on high standards and achievement. The good progress the school has made is a result of this strong teamwork. All of the school's leaders contribute to the coordination of the school's work.

Subject leaders monitor teaching and standards well and contribute to school improvement planning. They are well placed to share decision making about the future development with the headteacher. They set good examples to others by their own high quality teaching. This has been significant in ensuring the good progress and standards achieved by pupils. The current school improvement plan is satisfactory but lacks detail about how to monitor progress.

The supportive governing body now contributes to this good progress. It has recently established a full committee structure and is developing the role of 'critical friend' to challenge the work of the school. This is a recent change and governors have appropriate plans to monitor the school's financial stability and the pupils' educational progress with increasing rigour. With the strong leadership offered by the headteacher, who has a very clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses, the school has a good capacity 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>	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	2	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	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	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?	2	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 Pupils St Mary's Catholic Primary School High Street Evesham WR11 4EJ

1 December 2005

Dear Pupils

As you know, we have spent some time in your school finding out about how well you are all doing. We have enjoyed meeting you and watching what you do. We managed to talk with many of you and also enjoyed hearing what you think about your school.

We thought you would like to hear what we have said to your teachers.

What we liked most about your school

- You are very friendly and helpful to visitors.
- You work hard in lessons and enjoy learning.
- Your headteacher runs the school very well and knows how to improve things.
- The teachers are doing a good job - they work hard and are helping you make good progress.
- Your behaviour is good, both in class and in the playground.
- Your parents are very pleased with the school.

What we have asked your school to do now

- Help you to write longer and more interesting stories.
- Ask the school governors to be even more involved in making sure that you all do as well as you possibly can.

Yours sincerely

The Inspection Team