



# St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Knaresborough

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 121637  
**LEA** North Yorkshire  
**Inspection number** 281065  
**Inspection dates** 9 February 2006 to 10 February 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Mr Tony Thornley CfBT Lead Inspector

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Tentergate Road
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided		Knaresborough
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5 to 11		North Yorkshire HG5 9BG
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01423 864631
<b>Number on roll</b>	201	<b>Fax number</b>	01423 867038
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr P Bryant
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	25 September 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr J Donnelly

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by a team of two additional inspectors.

## Description of the school

St.Mary's Primary School provides a Catholic education for children from Knaresborough and the surrounding area. The school's intake includes the full range of ability, but with an above average number of more able pupils. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals and with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well below the national average. Most year groups contain more girls than boys. A small number of pupils are from a local Traveller community but there are very few from minority ethnic groups. The number of pupils on the school roll is growing slowly although few pupils enter after the start of Year 1.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

St. Mary's is a good school which is fulfilling its mission as 'a caring Christian family that celebrates and nurtures each person's unique potential'. It has established a strong inclusive ethos in which every child is given the best possible chance to succeed. Very good care and teaching help pupils to enjoy learning, to achieve well and to make good progress throughout the school.

Achievement and standards are good. As a result of good teaching, pupils achieve above average standards in all subjects by Year 6. The quality of the work in the Foundation Stage is very good. Standards in reading by Year 2 and in all aspects of English by Year 6 are high, but some more able pupils underperform in mathematics and English in Key Stage 2.

Pupils enjoy school. Their behaviour and attendance are very good. The school's curriculum is satisfactory. It is broad and balanced and enriched by many additional activities. The school has plans to ensure there are coherent programmes for information and communication technology (ICT) and for personal, social, citizenship and health education (PSCHE) which at the moment are weak.

The school has many good partnerships which improve provision for learners, including with parents, the local parish and with nearby specialist secondary schools.

Leadership and management are good at all levels and the school gives good value for money. The acting headteacher and the new deputy headteacher have maintained the school's momentum in difficult circumstances. The school is now, in the words of a governor, 'ready to fly'.

### What the school should do to improve further

The school already knows that it needs to improve:

- the curriculum provision for PSCHE and ICT
- its systems for checking how well it is doing, incorporating the outcomes into a more focused school development plan
- the progress made by more able pupils in Key Stage 2.

It should also consider how it can further develop pupils' skills as learners, for example by making it clearer to them how to improve.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well at St. Mary's. Standards by Year 2 and Year 6 are above the national averages in all subjects. Pupils make good progress throughout the school, particularly in English where standards are well above national averages.

When pupils enter the school their skills, for example in reading, are better than those of pupils nationally. During the Foundation Stage they make good progress from this

strong base, with especially good use made of the external area as an extended classroom to develop physical and creative skills. In Key Stage 1, test results for reading are very good, and better than those for writing, whilst results in mathematics are good. In Key Stage 2, pupils' progress is consistently better than the progress of similar pupils nationally, with English and science stronger than mathematics. The good progress is founded on good teaching throughout the school and very good personal support for pupils who have difficulties.

The school sets, and usually achieves, challenging targets for itself. Pupils of average and below average ability, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are particularly successful. More able girls in mathematics and more able boys in English do not consistently fulfil their respective potentials.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development and well-being at the school are good. Pupils say that, 'learning at this school is fun'. Their attendance is above the national average although a few pupils' punctuality is inconsistent. The attitudes and behaviour of nearly all pupils are very good and most enjoy learning. For example, pupils in a Year 1 English lesson showed real interest and enjoyment in finding out 'What's in the box'? Pupils say that they feel safe in school and that they have a voice in the way the school is run. Members of the school council take their responsibilities seriously and they are clearly proud to have been chosen by their fellow pupils by a democratic vote following a short speech.

The school's strong Catholic ethos underpins the good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils have a good understanding of other cultures. These are discussed in religious education and promoted through special events such as the recent Muslim week and a study of Italian culture. Theme days, for example, on healthy living, help pupils to learn about themselves and working with others; the importance of healthy lifestyles was also observed in a brief skipping lesson for Year 4 pupils. There is a wide range of extra curricular activities and clubs which includes sport, music and drama as well as learning to play bridge.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Pupils at St.Mary's say that, 'our teachers are great'. They are right. Teaching is good with some outstanding individual practice. The best lessons inspire pupils of all abilities to produce very high quality work, particularly in English. These lessons include stimulating activities which are matched well to individual pupils' needs. For example, in a lesson about poetry, the teacher gave a stimulating introduction and then helped pupils to write and then read, with feeling, first class poems of their own.

Children learn well because teachers are skilful and have established very good relationships with their classes. Thorough and regular assessments in English and mathematics enable teachers to monitor their pupils' progress well against national curriculum levels. However it is not always clear to pupils what they need to do to improve their work.

Teachers use a wide range of activities to motivate pupils, but ICT is not used sufficiently by pupils or teachers to support learning. Existing resources are inadequate and are limiting pupils' progress, but the school has good plans to rectify this situation.

Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are taught well and make good progress. Teachers and teaching assistants cooperate very effectively to make sure they have work of the right standard. More able pupils are given challenging work in some lessons, but this is not yet consistent throughout the school.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

The school's curriculum is satisfactory and meets statutory requirements. In the Foundation Stage, the emphasis is on learning through fun and enjoyment. This works well, for example, pupils' clear understanding of the meaning of a single 'chime' - to keep still and be quiet - was impressive to observe at such a young age! In Key Stages 1 and 2, the curriculum includes an appropriate balance of topic work and basic skills development, with English a particular strength. As the school is aware, there is not yet a progressive programme of PSCE, and insufficient use is made of ICT.

The curriculum is enriched by a wide range of activities. Pupils make regular visits outside school, and good partnerships with the parish and with local specialist secondary schools add to the opportunities available. These also include residential experiences and the development of pupils' awareness of enterprise matters. A collaborative project between parents and staff to create an outdoor classroom in the school's grounds is underway and will provide excellent scope for drama and for teaching about the environment.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The standard of care, guidance and support for pupils is very high. The school's caring and supportive ethos permeates most of its work and the impact on pupils' personal development and self-esteem is very positive. Health and safety systems and child protection arrangements are in place and appropriate records are maintained. The school provides particularly good care for any vulnerable pupils through internal and external support staff and effective tracking of progress.

Admissions to the Foundation Stage are well managed, with good participation by parents. Transition into Year 1 is planned carefully and pupils are well supported. Links with local secondary schools are good and older pupils are confident about transfer arrangements.

Parents are kept well informed of their child's achievements through reports and open evenings, but communication could be even better, for example by making more consistent use of the pupils' diaries. Pupils have individual targets, but these are a mixture of behavioural and academic. Most know what they need to focus on to improve in literacy, but they are less clear about what is required in numeracy. However, all take pride in the progress they are making.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

St. Mary's is well led and managed. This is a considerable achievement given recent changes and temporary arrangements for the leadership of the school. The school's mission - to celebrate and nurture each person's unique potential - is reflected well in the direction set by the acting headteacher and the newly appointed deputy headteacher, and is demonstrated by the progress made by pupils. Together, staff create a Christian family ethos within which pupils can thrive.

The day-to-day running of the school is very smooth. Resources are organised well, especially the use made of teaching assistants. The school has made the development of all of its staff a priority; the impact of this has been a key factor in the progress made by pupils. Subject leaders make valuable contributions to the running of the school and have devolved responsibilities. There is good sharing of practice, for example through collective checking of each teacher's work. Governors are supportive and well-informed and fulfil their statutory responsibilities well.

The school knows its strengths and weaknesses and knows what it needs to do to improve. However, its analysis is not as systematic or rigorous as it could be, and it is not yet part of the school's planning cycle. The school development plan is thorough and wide-ranging but it has too many priorities. Fewer, clearer, priorities would improve its impact.

The school's capacity to improve further is very good - in the words of one of the governors, 'the school is ready to fly'.

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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>	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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

<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	2	NA

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2	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>	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	2	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**

We enjoyed meeting you when we inspected St.Mary's. You were kind and courteous to us and were good ambassadors for your school.

What we liked most about your school:

- your behaviour is good, you work hard and you make good progress
- you are kind and thoughtful to each other and to the staff
- all the adults in school care a lot about how you are getting on and help you to do your best
- some of you said to us, 'our teachers are great'; you are right - you are taught very well
- your school is a happy one and it runs smoothly
- Mr.Donnelly and Mr.Stockdale have done well since starting in January; they know how, with your help, to make the school even better
- nearly all your parents support the school's work
- you have a really good school council which helps the school to run well.

What we have asked your school to do now:

- make sure you can use computers when you need to - the school has good plans for this
- teach you more about how you can understand yourself and others and be good citizens
- help you to learn better, for example, by making clear to you what you should do to improve and giving able pupils work which makes them think hard.

We wish you all the very best for your future at St.Mary's.