



# St Mary's Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 124358  
**LEA** Staffordshire  
**Inspection number** 281701  
**Inspection dates** 29 March 2006 to 30 March 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Paul Edwards AI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Stanier Street
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided		Newcastle
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11		Staffordshire ST5 2SU
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01782 619685
<b>Number on roll</b>	398	<b>Fax number</b>	01782 714588
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr James Wood
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	16 October 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Gillian Regan

<b>Age group</b> 3 to 11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 29 March 2006 - 30 March 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 281701
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

St Mary's is a large Catholic primary school and pupils are drawn from a wide area. About half of the children entering the Reception classes have been to the Nursery class which was opened in 2004. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is below average. Just over 12% of the pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds, many of whom are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

The school provides a good standard of education for its pupils. Its own judgement of satisfactory is too conservative. The school provides good value for money. The children are given a good start to their education in the Nursery and Reception classes where effective teaching ensures they make good progress. Improvements to the quality of teaching throughout the school are helping to raise pupils' achievement. In Year 6, standards are above average in English, mathematics and science and, overall, the pupils achieve well.

Teaching is good overall. In lessons, more able pupils are not always challenged sufficiently and do not do as well as they should in English and mathematics. Occasionally pupils have too little opportunity to make use of their well developed independence, for example when carrying out investigations in science. Also, too little attention is paid to ensuring older pupils present their work as neatly as they should. Pupils are well cared for and their personal development is outstanding.

Leadership and management are good. The school has made good progress since the last inspection and there is a clear capacity to improve further. Good leadership has established an effective Nursery. In addition, it has managed ongoing building work and a high rate of unavoidable staff absences with minimum disruption to pupils' learning. Subject leaders are beginning to have more impact on raising standards through their analysis of assessment data. However, they are not yet ensuring the teachers always use the information to challenge the more able pupils to do better.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure pupils, particularly the more able, are given work that is sufficiently challenging in English and mathematics.
- Develop the monitoring role of subject leaders further to ensure teachers make better use of assessment information when planning work for the more able pupils.
- Improve the presentation of the pupils' work, particularly that of the older pupils.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

The pupils attain standards that are above average and they achieve well. The children enter the Nursery and Reception classes with broadly average levels of attainment. They make good progress and most attain the goals expected of them by the time they enter Year 1, with a significant minority exceeding them. Good progress is maintained throughout the school. However, the more able pupils do not always do as well as they should in English and mathematics. Challenging targets are set for the pupils' performance in national tests and in 2005 these were exceeded in English and mathematics. At the end of Key Stage 2, standards are above average and effective teaching is resulting in the improving standards seen across the school. The school places a strong emphasis on the pupils' speaking skills and this is seen in their

considerable confidence in this aspect. Pupils who are learning English as an additional language are provided with good support, enabling them to make rapid progress in their acquisition of English. Pupils with learning difficulties are also provided with a good level of support, enabling them to make the same rate of progress as their classmates.

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

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' personal development and well-being is outstanding, as is their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. From the time children start in the Nursery there is a strong emphasis on developing confidence and high self-esteem. This continues throughout the school, resulting in pupils who are extremely polite, friendly and self-confident. They enjoy school and always try to do their best. They particularly like their teachers and their work. One Year 6 boy commented, 'I like everything. I am a well-rounded person!' Older pupils help younger ones, and provide very good role models for behaviour, for example, in assembly. Behaviour is exemplary both in and out of class. The very positive attitudes of pupils are reflected in their good attendance and punctuality.

Pupils have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles, the importance of regular exercise and how to keep themselves safe. They are very respectful of others and have a strong sense of community. Through their work as school councillors, they successfully learn about citizenship, welcoming the opportunity to be involved in making decisions and using their initiative. Councillors speak proudly, for example, about how they have improved playtime facilities. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education and for life in the future.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are of good quality. Teachers make lessons interesting and enjoyable. They create very good relationships with pupils, giving them plenty of encouragement and support. Pupils speak highly of the help their teachers give them. Pupils respond with concentration and effort, whatever their abilities. Behaviour in lessons is almost always very good and often excellent. A strength of the teaching is its success in promoting pupils' high levels of self-confidence which is evident in the keen, confident and articulate way they express themselves.

Teachers' careful and systematic assessment of pupils' progress is soundly used to plan tasks and provide support suited to pupils' abilities and needs. Teachers and support staff give pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities well planned and effective extra help. However, there are some occasions when the more able pupils, particularly the older ones, are not fully challenged. These pupils say 'we could do harder work' on these occasions. In part, this reflects the way teachers sometimes give

pupils too much direction so that pupils are unable to apply their qualities of independence and responsibility to their learning. They have too few opportunities to show how much they can do for themselves in solving problems, asking their own questions and finding out for themselves.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good. It is broad, covers all the required subjects and places a successful emphasis on basic skills. A good range of additional opportunities for learning is provided through the well attended after-school clubs, through educational visits and visitors, and through productive links with a local high school and college. The curriculum generally caters well for the range of pupils' needs, and those with learning difficulties or disabilities are fully included in all aspects of the school's work. The curriculum is very successful in promoting pupils' personal development alongside their academic progress. A good emphasis on opportunities for pupils to practise speaking and listening skills and to engage in music, dance and drama leads to pupils' impressive confidence and willingness to express themselves. These qualities, together with opportunities to take responsibility and work in teams, prepare pupils well for later adult life and employment. Pupils also receive good help to develop the understanding and skills to help them stay safe and healthy.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The good care, support and guidance offered to the pupils help them to do well and contribute to their outstanding personal development. This is a school where every child matters and all staff are very committed to ensuring pupils' well-being. All health, safety and first aid procedures are firmly in place as are child protection arrangements. Parents are highly satisfied with the school's work in caring for their children. The pupils who have learning difficulties and those who are seen to be vulnerable receive good support. The school works closely with other professionals to secure the best advice. Arrangements for settling new children into school and for transferring to secondary schools are good. Academic guidance is good overall, although more able pupils are not always given sufficient guidance about how they might improve their work.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has a clear understanding of the school's strengths and there are clear plans in place to address its weaknesses. Together with senior staff she has very effectively managed the difficulties of a large number of unavoidable staff absences over the last 12 months, resulting in little disruption to pupils' learning. Resources are used very well and the increasing number of pupils from minority ethnic heritages who are learning English receive good support,

enabling them to take a full part in all aspects of school life. The Foundation Stage is well managed and the opening of the Nursery is helping to raise standards further. Improved monitoring of subjects by co-ordinators is also helping to raise standards. However, subject leaders are not yet sufficiently proactive in ensuring the data obtained from assessment is used effectively. This results in weaknesses in some lessons when the more able pupils are not always challenged sufficiently. There are good opportunities for the pupils to express their views through the school council and these are valued and acted upon by the school. The views of parents are also canvassed and used to influence what is taking place in school. The governors fulfil their statutory duties well. They are very supportive and have taken a lead role in overseeing the building work which is improving the physical environment for the pupils. They recognise they need to be more aware of what is happening in classrooms.

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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	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

<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>	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	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>	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>	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	2	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**

Thank you all very much for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. We found your school to be a happy and friendly place.

These are some of the good things we found

- You enjoy coming to school and being with your friends
- You behave exceptionally well and work very hard in your lessons
- You enjoy taking responsibility, for example being part of the school council
- The confidence and skill you show when you speak in public
- The adults work hard to keep you safe and healthy.

These are the things we have asked those in charge of the school to do to make it better

- Make sure you all do as well as you can in English and mathematics by the time you leave the school
- Make sure you present your written work more neatly in all subjects
- Ensure those in charge of individual subjects make better use of assessment information to help raise standards further.

We are pleased that you enjoy school and wish you all the best for the future.

Thank you again for helping us with our work.