



# Cottesmore St Mary's Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 114567  
**LEA** Brighton and Hove  
**Inspection number** 284203  
**Inspection dates** 15 March 2006 to 16 March 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Steffi Penny HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	The Upper Drive
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided		Hove
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11		East Sussex BN3 6NB
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01273 555811
<b>Number on roll</b>	430	<b>Fax number</b>	01273 555423
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr Peter Laverick
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	18 October 1999	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Anne O'Sullivan

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
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## **Introduction**

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

## **Description of the school**

This is a large primary school in an affluent area of Hove. Most pupils are White British with a small number from Black, Asian or mixed backgrounds. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is well below the national average. Most children start school with good skill levels in all areas of learning. Nearly all pupils are fluent in English. The school has been awarded the Active Gold Mark.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 3**

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires Special Measures.

Since the last inspection the school has held a modest view of its work. This inspection found that it now provides a satisfactory education for its pupils and gives satisfactory value for money.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school now reflects its Christian ethos more openly through its environment. Parents and pupils appreciate this. They also feel a greater involvement with the school and that it has listened to their views and acted upon them.

Whilst teaching and learning remains better in Reception classes there is no longer significant underachievement in Years 3 to 6. Pupils are enthusiastic learners and make rapid progress. Sound assessment procedures are now in place but these need to be extended further and have greater pupil involvement.

The headteacher has striven hard to raise standards. She sets very high expectations and is supported by everyone. Governors now challenge and support the school effectively. Middle management is satisfactory but their monitoring of learning needs to have greater rigour.

The school has improved dramatically since the last inspection. This is due to the enthusiastic and hardworking staff who have readily embraced the new vision and changes implemented by the headteacher and governors. The school has great capacity to improve further.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Continue to improve the quality and use of assessment throughout the school including developing ways for pupils to assess their own work and learning.
- Continue to develop the skills and effectiveness of middle managers.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Overall standards are good and achievement is satisfactory. Children enter the school with above average levels of attainment. In Reception they make good progress across all areas of learning and almost all children achieve or exceed the early learning goals by the time they join Year 1.

Standards in English, mathematics and science at age seven have been consistently above the national average during the past three years. At age eleven, however, standards have been more variable. They were above average in 2003, fell sharply in 2004, but gained much of the lost ground in 2005.

The school's analysis of pupil data shows that historically some pupils in Years 3 to 6 had not been achieving as well as they should. Since the last inspection, staff, with excellent support from local authority advisers, have identified and tackled any significant underachievement.

More accurate assessments and improved use of data are helping teachers and senior managers to set and monitor challenging targets for pupils in every class. As a result, progress across Years 1 to 6 is satisfactory overall and improving fast. Pupils in Years 2 and 6 are on course to meet the challenging targets for the end of the current academic year.

Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make satisfactory progress. Those at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs make good progress because of the good support they receive. Parents make a very good contribution to pupils' learning at home and through their very strong support for the school.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development is good. Pupils enjoy school and participate eagerly in lessons. The Reception classes promote children's personal development very well. Pupils are sensitive to the needs of others and relate very well to adults. Relationships are a significant strength.

The social and moral development of pupils is outstanding. Many pupils have specific jobs within the community. Spiritual development, both through the curriculum and the seamless recognition of the Catholic faith underpinning daily life, is good. Cultural development is also good particularly in relation to the creative arts and literature. However, the multicultural dimension is less overt. The diversity of faiths and cultures in the local area is not strongly reflected in the school environment.

Pupils have good attitudes to learning. They behave very well. They have no significant concerns about bullying, recognising that good procedures exist to ensure their safety. One pupil said, "Adults make sure we never go home on bad terms." The school monitors any incidents very well. Although there is no school council at present, pupils have easy access to the headteacher and have good opportunities to share their views with senior staff and governors.

Many charity activities have been initiated and fully managed by the pupils. Pupils are also well prepared for later education as a result of their good basic literacy and numeracy skills.

Healthy lifestyles are embraced by pupils through making appropriate choices at lunchtime and engagement in physical activities. Whilst attendance was below average at the last inspection, this has improved significantly and is now average. Better systems are now in place to track absences and to reduce holidays in term time. Punctuality is good.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and are improving fast. Teaching in Reception is good, and on occasions is outstanding. This is because staff have a very good understanding of how young pupils learn best and provide a wide range of interesting activities that challenge and motivate pupils very well.

Although the last inspection highlighted marked differences between the quality of teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 and that in Years 3 to 6, this is no longer the case. Intensive training and the staff's strong desire to make things better means that teaching is now at least satisfactory and often good. Lessons are now more interesting because better use is made of visual aids and there are greater opportunities for pupils to carry out practical work and to discuss their ideas.

Assessment procedures have improved significantly from a very weak starting point. Teachers now have reliable information about the strengths and weaknesses in pupils' attainment and planning is more precisely matched to their needs. Good examples of pupils evaluating their own work were seen during the inspection, a process that the school is working to develop. All pupils have clear English and mathematics targets that pupils know and understand. Marking is regular and, in the best instances, shows pupils how they can improve.

Good input from the learning support assistants often enables pupils with special educational needs to make good progress. Pupils' progress is reviewed regularly and parents and class teachers are now closely involved. Pupils' individual education plans, however, need to be more precise and so does the identification of some pupils' learning needs.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

Overall the curriculum is satisfactory and meets national requirements. In the Foundation Stage outdoor play is satisfactory but remains constrained pending the redevelopment of the outdoor area. Pupils particularly enjoy the themed weeks and residential trip and would welcome these opportunities to be extended further. There is a growing awareness by teachers that there are missed opportunities to make stronger links between subjects.

The extracurricular opportunities are rich and extremely well supported. For example, 120 pupils play musical instruments. Sports play an integral part in developing healthy lifestyles and a competitive spirit. Pupils are very successful in competitions and their success is celebrated throughout the school and in newsletters.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall. Pastoral care is consistently good, academic guidance is satisfactory. The very good relationships are a significant strength. The quality of care is particularly good in the Foundation Stage. Children feel very secure and confident and this promotes their personal development very well.

Links with parents are now good. Parents increasingly contribute to the work of the school. Community links with the churches, other schools and community organisations are satisfactory and improving rapidly.

Risk assessments are thorough and the environment is well maintained. The school has good procedures for child protection.

Pupils now have individual targets in English and mathematics. Although this is a recent innovation, pupils already have a secure knowledge of their standards and targets. The quality of support for children with statements of special educational needs is good. Links with external agencies are good.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

Overall, the school's leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher is an inspirational and outstanding leader who has managed to move the school forward significantly in a very short time. Senior leaders have a clear overview of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The team atmosphere, in which all staff work together with energy, enthusiasm and strong commitment, has created a common sense of purpose and recognition that standards must continue to improve. The local authority has provided excellent support and the school has been quick to take up the opportunities offered and build upon the work of external consultants. Consequently the school has a strong capacity to continue its rapid rate of improvement.

Sound systems are in place to measure the effectiveness of the school. A priority has been to extend the role of subject leaders in monitoring the quality of work in their subject because they were not routinely involved in doing this. Consequently the role of middle managers is satisfactory and developing. They have been central to improving the quality of provision.

The views of parents and pupils are genuinely sought and acted upon. Pupils appreciate the changes that have been made in a short space of time. These include an increase in the positions of responsibility available to them and the improvements to the lavatories. Parents hold the school in high regard and now feel more welcome and involved with their children's learning.

The restructured governing body is well led by the new chair. The governors have worked tirelessly to ensure that they effectively monitor the school's work and hold it to account. The governing body is now well organised to fulfil its key responsibilities. Governors have a strong strategic overview and are clearly focused on raising standards.

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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	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>	3	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	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	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	3	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	3	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>	3	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	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 for the very warm welcome you gave to us when we inspected your school recently. Some of you met the inspectors and many of you will have seen us around the school. Thank you for telling us what you thought about your school. This helped us to decide how well you are doing. This letter is to let you know what your school does well and how you can help your school to be even better.

We can see that you are very happy in school and that you are proud of the work that is in your books and on the walls. You really like school and, in particular, the school clubs, themed weeks and visits. You are friendly and take good care of one another. You appreciate the changes that have been made since the last inspection in particular the improved toilet areas and more chances to be monitors. You have also welcomed being able to use whiteboards and having more interesting lessons.

We have asked Miss O'Sullivan to work with the staff to look more closely at how fast you are learning and in particular how you can measure for yourself how well you are doing and what you could do better. Perhaps you can think of ways of helping them to do this?

We wish you every success in the future. Keep up the good work!