



# St Mary of Charity CE (Aided) Primary School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 133663  
**LEA** Kent  
**Inspection number** 284351  
**Inspection dates** 30 January 2006 to 31 January 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Linda McGill 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>	Orchard Place
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided		Faversham
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11		Kent ME13 8AP
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01795 532496
<b>Number on roll</b>	270	<b>Fax number</b>	01795 591052
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Rev Tony Oehring
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not applicable	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Rachel Palmer

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
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## Introduction

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

## Description of the school

St Mary of Charity is situated in an area of mixed housing in Faversham in Kent. In common with other schools in the town the roll has fallen in recent years and stands at 270. Very few pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds and almost all of them speak English as their home language. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is just above that found nationally but the proportion who have identified special educational needs, including a statement of special educational need, is high, at almost half. Attainment on entry is low. The school was last inspected in June 2004 when it was found to require special measures.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures. Nevertheless, in accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to the quality and standards in the Foundation Stage, and attendance.

At the start of the inspection, the recently appointed headteacher asserted confidently that St Mary of Charity is an improving school and the inspection team agrees. Under the strong and committed leadership of the headteacher, the school has taken great strides forward over the past six months and there is good capacity to improve even further. The most significant improvements have been made in the school's leadership and management, which are good. The impact of these can be seen in the better quality of teaching and learning in Key Stages 1 and 2, which is leading to faster progress for the pupils who are beginning to make up lost ground. Standards and achievement are rising. The pupils show increasing enjoyment and enthusiasm for learning and their behaviour is generally good. Despite these important improvements, the school's overall effectiveness is inadequate. Although the leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are satisfactory and the curriculum is appropriate, the children do not make enough progress because of weaknesses in the teaching. Across the whole school, attendance is too low. There are also weaknesses in the provision for the pupils' cultural development. The school does not provide satisfactory value for money.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve teaching in the Foundation Stage in order to raise standards.
- Continue with efforts to improve attendance.
- Improve provision for the pupils' cultural development.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

Achievement and standards are satisfactory overall and improving. However, the children do not get off to the best possible start in the Reception year. Because of weaknesses in teaching, their progress is slower than it should be and, in communication, language and literacy and mathematics, too few reach the goals which are expected for their age. This means that when they start Year 1, some have a good deal of catching up to do. Teaching has improved in Key Stage 1, progress is more consistently satisfactory and standards are rising. Better teaching in Key Stage 2 meant that last year's results in the national tests at the end of Year 6 were average overall and most pupils made good progress across the key stage in English. Pupils currently in Year 6 are on track to reach the challenging targets that have been set for them. The teachers have identified gaps in the pupils' knowledge and are taking steps to address weaknesses in their basic skills in English and mathematics. As a result, the

pupils are making satisfactory and increasingly good progress and standards are improving. The high proportion of pupils who have special educational needs make progress in line with their classmates as do those who are learning English as an additional language. There are encouraging signs that the pupils use their literacy and numeracy skills successfully in other subjects, especially history and science. For example, in Year 5, the pupils made good use of their skills in information and communication technology to create multi-media presentations about the Second World War.

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

### **Grade: 3**

The pupils' attitudes to learning and behaviour have improved a good deal over the past year. There is a calm working atmosphere and the pupils show increasing enthusiasm and enjoyment in lessons. Behaviour is generally good and the pupils are polite and responsive. The pupils' social and moral development is well catered for. Lessons in personal, social and health education help pupils to understand their own and others' needs and responsibilities. Working towards 'golden time' is a powerful incentive for good behaviour and effort. Important issues such as bullying are discussed openly and the pupils are helped to understand how they can keep themselves safe. The pupils enjoy taking responsibility for organising assemblies and are beginning to play a part in the wider life of the school, for example, through participating in the school council. They take part in activities in the community such as celebrations at Christmas and harvest. Assemblies make a positive contribution to the pupils' spiritual development but the school knows that it does not do enough to help the pupils learn about living in a multicultural society.

The staff make great efforts to stress the importance of regular attendance, both to pupils and parents. Recently there has been a modest improvement in attendance but it is still too low. Punctuality to school is much better.

Effective lessons in science help the pupils understand the importance of healthy lifestyles and many make sensible choices at lunch time. The school's growing emphasis on developing the pupils' basic skills and increasing their independence and responsibility prepares pupils well for the next stage in their education.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching and learning are satisfactory and there are particular strengths in Years 1 to 6. However, the teaching in the Foundation Stage is not good enough and does not enable the youngest children to make progress at an acceptable rate.

Teaching in Years 1 to 6 has improved over the past year and there is much that is good. There have been significant improvements to how the teachers assess and track attainment. This means that teachers can quickly identify if the pupils are not making

swift enough progress and take steps to help them move on. The teachers have set appropriate targets for each pupil in English and mathematics and the pupils know what they are working towards. Marking is thorough and consistent and tells the pupils whether they have achieved the learning objective for each lesson. The pupils look forward to seeing what the teacher has written and are motivated to achieve. The teaching of pupils who have special educational needs or who are learning English as an additional language is good. The teaching assistants provide effective support which helps the pupils make more consistently good progress in lessons. The pupils themselves have contributed to better learning because of their increasingly positive attitudes to work.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum is satisfactory. It covers subjects in sufficient breadth and depth, emphasises basic skills, and takes account of the mixed age classes. The programme for personal, social and health education is developing well. Relevant links are being made between different subjects to help eliminate previous weaknesses. For example, work on interpreting line graphs is included in science lessons. The school acknowledges that the curriculum does not yet give enough emphasis to the pupils' cultural development and, although provision for spiritual development is satisfactory, the school intends to give greater emphasis to the Christian ethos which underpins its work.

There is a satisfactory range of extracurricular activities, including clubs for French, German, football and rugby, and a choir. Visits from the 'Life Education Bus' help pupils understand how to deal with important issues such as drugs. Visits to places such as Dover Castle make a good contribution to the pupils' learning in history.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

The school works effectively to ensure the pupils are safe and secure. There are good procedures to protect children. Pupils who have personal and emotional problems and those who have special educational needs are well supported. For example, 'Room 15' is a safe haven for pupils at risk of being excluded and the warm but firm guidance the pupils receive helps them manage their time in class better. Links with outside agencies are particularly effective and have had a significant impact on improving behaviour. Pupils who speak English as an additional language and those from traveller families are supported effectively through good links with the local authority's advisory teachers.

The school is now in a good position to ensure that the pupils' academic progress is given as much emphasis as their care and welfare. Pupils are beginning to be involved in setting their own targets for learning. They have responded positively and are confident to explain the targets to visitors.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

The headteacher is a strong and determined leader. She has a clear vision for what she intends the school to be like in the future and has communicated this effectively to the members of staff and governors, who have been enthused by her energy and drive. Her vision is based on a secure understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and high aspirations of what can be achieved. She has successfully enabled senior and middle managers to develop their skills and knowledge. They are working effectively to improve the teaching in their phase teams and are leading their subjects well.

The impact of better leadership at all levels is apparent in improvements to the quality of teaching and learning which are in turn leading to faster progress for the pupils. The speed with which weaknesses are being tackled and the sound understanding of what to do next are clear indicators of the school's good capacity to make further improvements.

The headteacher and staff are out and about in the playground at the start and end of the day and ready to talk with parents. The headteacher is determined to make a positive change in the way the school works with parents by making expectations crystal clear and working as partners in the children's education.

The governing body has kept the school's progress under close scrutiny. The governing body now plays its part in holding the school to account for its performance as well as supporting its drive 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>	<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>	4	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	4	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>	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	3	NA

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	3	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	4	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	3	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>	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	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	4	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 very much for the warm welcome you gave to me and my colleague, Mr Curtis, when we inspected your school at the end of January.

We were really pleased to see how much things have improved at St Mary's over the past eighteen months. You behaved well in lessons and assembly and it was good to see you enjoying the work you were doing. The teachers have improved the way they keep track of what you have learned and do their best to make lessons interesting and challenging.

You also have a new headteacher. It was clear to us that things will continue to get better because Mrs Palmer, the staff and governors are determined to make St Mary of Charity a school to be proud of.

There are a few things the school still needs to work on. Firstly, you can help by making sure that you come to school as often as you can—you will learn more this way. Secondly, the school needs to make sure that the youngest children get the best possible start in the Reception class. Finally, the school could do more to help you learn about living in multicultural Britain today.