

## Euxton St Mary's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	119676
<b>Local Authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	291501
<b>Inspection dates</b>	9–10 May 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	June Tracey

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	202
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Jane Conley
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Barbara Coulton
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 November 2002
<b>School address</b>	Wigan Road Euxton Chorley Lancashire PR7 6JW
<b>Telephone number</b>	01257 262049
<b>Fax number</b>	01257 234324

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

St Mary's is an average sized primary school. It serves areas with above average socio-economic indicators and is a popular choice with parents. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below average. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The percentage whose first language is not believed to be English is low; a very small number is at the early stage of language acquisition. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average, as is the proportion with statements of special educational need. Attainment on entry has risen to above average in the last three years, prior to which it was average.

## 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. Some aspects of its work are outstanding, contributing to pupils' excellent personal development. Parents overwhelmingly support this view and one wrote, 'I consider one of St Mary's strong points to be that it has managed to strike a successful balance between the academic and other aspects of a well-rounded education for my children.' Pupils' enjoyment of school is obvious. This is due to outstanding, innovative leadership by the headteacher that is backed up by a dedicated team of teaching and non-teaching staff and good management by leaders and governors. The school is effective in engaging in partnership with other schools and in encouraging pupils to take an interest in issues that affect the local community.

Children settle quickly into school on entry to the Reception class. They are provided with plentiful opportunities to develop independence. By the end of the Reception Year, children's attainment is more advanced than normally found at this stage. Pupils achieve well throughout the school. Standards are above average in Key Stage 2, which represents good progress because these pupils' attainment on entry to the school was average. Teaching is consistently good. In Key Stage 1, teachers take good account of the rising attainment on entry by sharply focusing and building on what pupils already know and can do. A feature of the teaching throughout the school is the use of drama to help pupils express themselves fluently and accurately in writing and pupils say how much they enjoy this new dimension to lessons this year. It is increasing their capacity to communicate and to transfer skills to other subjects. The catalyst for this improvement was the difference between pupils' attainment at the higher level (Level 5) in reading and writing in 2006. It is too early, however, for the full impact of the recent development in teaching to be seen in pupils' test results and the teachers are still sharing ideas and assessing the most effective practice. The school safeguards pupils well through its policies and procedures and by encouraging healthy living. Pupils' behaviour and consideration for others are exemplary; they feel that their views are listened to and taken into account. It was a pleasure to see how much satisfaction they gained from joining in musical and sporting activities, whatever the level of their talent.

Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well because the support for them is very adaptable. Being flexible, it responds quickly to their immediate needs and extends to those of other pupils who, for any reason, may need additional help. Information from whole-school assessment procedures is effective and triggers support quickly when individual pupils are found to be making slow progress.

Pupils' good progress towards gaining the skills and personal qualities that will lead to a satisfying life in future years are at the heart of the school's work. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and the issues raised in the school's development plan indicate a good capacity for further improvement. The school provides good value for money.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Raise the proportion of pupils reaching the higher level in English by improving writing.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Standards are above average and rising. Pupils achieve well throughout the school because the provision is carefully tailored to meet their specific needs. Children make good progress in the Reception class; many exceed the early learning goals in all areas of development by the end of the Foundation stage. Continued good progress in Key Stage 1 leads to above average standards in Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics. Lively, challenging teaching ensures that pupils of all abilities sustain their good progress as they move up the school and standards are above average at the end of Year 6. This represents good achievement for these pupils because their attainment on entry to the school was average. End of key stage assessments in Year 2 and pupils' results in national tests taken in Year 6 have been consistently above average since 2002, with demonstrable progress in mathematics. Targets are realistic and challenging. In 2006, all were met except in English at the higher level (Level 5). Analysis of the results revealed that this was because writing at this level did not match the high standards of pupils' reading. The school's action was thoughtful and swift. Strategies have been introduced to improve writing through the use of drama. Pupils of all abilities, in all year groups, are enjoying and benefiting from this approach. They are excited about capturing what they want to say accurately and fluently in writing. Consequently, the content and grammatical accuracy of their work is improving but the full effect of the new strategies will take time to work through to results in national tests. There is no significant difference between the achievement of boys and girls. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve similarly to other pupils, as do those who are gifted or talented in any aspect of their work. Pupils whose first language is not English make good progress.

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

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding, as is their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are very pleased with the way that their views and preferences are taken into account in the improvements the school makes. They learn successfully how to deal with any difficulties they might encounter and this also helps them to keep themselves safe. As one pupil commented, 'It helps us to sort any problems out. Sometimes we know it's better to just walk away.' They understand what they need to do to keep healthy and the importance of exercise, particularly through their involvement in sporting activities.

Pupils really enjoy school. One pupil summed up the general view in his comment 'ours is a good school'. This is why their attendance is good. Relationships between pupils and adults are excellent and behaviour is exemplary. Pupils are courteous and generous in spirit towards their classmates and are keen to take on responsibility. The school council is very effective in introducing pupils to the meaning of democracy and to making decisions based on reasoned argument. Pupils say that such opportunities help them to become good citizens. The skills that pupils gain in literacy, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) prepare them well for their economic future. The very positive attitudes to learning and kindly personal qualities are a measure of their genuine and mature understanding of the different values, cultures and heritages in Britain and in the world beyond.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good. Some exciting features, such as the innovative developments in drama and role play, are deepening learning and engaging pupils effectively in questioning to consolidate their understanding. Pupils enjoy lessons, particularly when they are linked to real-life situations, visits and, in drama, imagined dilemmas that they have to resolve. As a result, pupils are gaining confidence in articulating their ideas, marshalling thoughts and making considered judgements. Their writing is improving but this has yet to be seen in the pupils' results in the Key Stage 2 tests. Typical of the lessons are the good relationships, streamlined planning, high expectations and impressive marking that shows pupils how to improve their work. Strengths in learning lie in the way that pupils persevere with determination to see tasks through to conclusion.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding. The needs of all pupils are met exceptionally well because the activities provided are carefully tailored to develop pupils into skilled learners. The activities also provide lots of fun. Some of the provision in science is excellent, inspiring activities that span several different subjects. Other dynamic activities start with a local interest but then take on a global dimension; for example, a visit by Year 5 pupils to the local quarry sparked much debate, drama, critical thinking and persuasive writing. Very good provision for personal, social and health education at the heart of each day's work contributes extremely well to pupils' personal development and well-being. Equally, the skills that pupils need for life are prominent in many of the activities and help pupils to reinforce and extend those they have acquired. Provision for the Foundation Stage is good; it features some delightfully imaginative activities that foster much conversation. Transition links to the other schools are strong. The specialist teaching in the school provided by the local high school contributes well to science, technology and drama, in particular.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 1

The quality of the care, guidance and support that the school provides is outstanding. Crucial factors are the school's good understanding of the needs of individual pupils and the close working relationships with parents. By sounding out parents' views and responding to them, the school enables parents to become active partners in their children's learning, for example, through meetings set up to work through the purpose and expected outcomes of pupils' homework tasks. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are very well cared for. Teachers and teaching assistants support them very well, linking with outside agencies where necessary to give added support to parents and carers. High priority is given to safeguarding pupils and procedures for child protection are firmly in place. Pupils say that any worries they may have are listened to and acted upon quickly. They receive excellent guidance, backed up by a very good assessment system, to help them achieve as well as they can in all aspects of their academic work and personal development.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

Leadership, management and governance are good. The headteacher's leadership is exceptional and drives the school forward on many fronts simultaneously. Good, in-depth discussion and consultation with staff lead to decisive action. The school knows itself well, correctly identifying its strengths and where further improvements can be made, such as further raising the standard of pupils' writing. Teachers and teaching assistants work very closely together. They understand how their work affects pupils' results in Year 6. Professional development and training are targeted well on the key priorities in the school development plan. Teachers willingly test out new practice, such as the strategies for using drama as a vehicle for learning across all subjects. This is already having an impact on pupils' learning and there is now scope for the sharing of the most effective practice. The school has improved well since the previous inspection, rigorously evaluates the effect of its work and responds quickly when action is necessary. Governance is good. The governors support the school actively and challenge it where further improvements are possible. Finances are managed prudently.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	1
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

11 May 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Lancashire, PR7 6JW

Thank you for your warm welcome and for talking to us so enthusiastically. We left with the impression that you really enjoy school and value all the opportunities that are open to you. We agree that you have reason to be proud of your school, both for what it does for you and for its involvement with the local community and beyond.

Your school helps you to develop very good social and personal skills, which were evident in your consideration and thoughtfulness for others. We were encouraged to see you sharing ideas and working out things for yourselves before seeking help from the teacher, which shows that you are learning to be independent. By Year 6, you are reaching standards above average for your age in English, mathematics and science. The school is ambitious for you to maintain these standards and to achieve even more. We believe that you can do this by improving your writing still further. Your teachers agree, which is why they have introduced drama into the teaching of English and other subjects. You say that you are enjoying working in this way and we saw how much it was helping you to coordinate your thoughts before putting them in writing. It is also helping you to think carefully about punctuation and how you get expression into your writing. Keep this up and perhaps some of you will become authors one day!

It was good to see and hear how you are learning to be fit and healthy. This will help you to make the most of life as you grow older. With the future in mind, we were encouraged to hear your concerns for global issues and suggestions for looking after the environment, for example, by preserving resources within your own school.

We send you our very best wishes for success, now and in the future.

Best wishes

June Tracey

Lead Inspector