



# St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School, Burnley

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 119703  
**Local Authority** Lancashire  
**Inspection number** 291511  
**Inspection dates** 17–18 October 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Shirley Herring

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 address</b>	Holcombe Drive
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided		Burnley, Lancashire
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11		BB10 4BH
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01282 427546
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	324	<b>Fax number</b>	01282 435914
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Pauline Atkins
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Ian Jones
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 March 2001		

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

- St Mary's is a larger than average primary school. The number of pupils on roll has fallen over the last few years and this has necessitated a move to mixed age classes. Pupils are almost exclusively from a White British background and most are baptised Roman Catholics. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. Very few pupils are at an early stage of learning English. The school has seen many changes of staffing since the last inspection, including changes of headteacher. The school has had an acting headteacher and deputy headteacher since January 2006. All children are allocated a part-time nursery place, but since 2004 a scheme has been in place whereby parents can pay for additional sessions. The school is part of an Excellence in Cities Cluster and is involved with the Lancashire Healthy Schools Standard. It has links with the parish.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school, which has coped effectively with significant changes over the recent past. The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. There is sound evaluation of the school's effectiveness and there is satisfactory capacity for improvement. It offers satisfactory value for money. The school's involvement with the Excellence in Cities Cluster, with the provision of a learning mentor and behaviour support worker, has resulted in good improvements in attendance, behaviour and pupils' self-esteem. Parents expressed appreciation of the school's hard work in improving behaviour.

Pupils say they enjoy coming to school and are enthusiastic about practical lessons such as design and technology and physical education. They develop a good understanding of a healthy lifestyle with free fruit in the Infants and the provision of healthy lunches. Pupils feel safe as they learn road safety awareness, and issues such as anti-bullying are dealt with in assemblies and in specific theme weeks. They make a good contribution to the community; for example, their silk pictures provided colourful designs for some road plaques. They are prepared satisfactorily for later life by developing good attitudes to work, but opportunities for working independently are limited.

Pupils achieve satisfactorily. Children enter the school with skills that are below those that are usual for their age. They make satisfactory progress in the Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1, although standards are below average at the end of Year 2. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 2, and in the 2005 tests at the end of Year 6 standards were broadly average in English, mathematics and science. Higher attaining pupils did not achieve as well as they could. Girls did better than boys.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers' lesson planning is satisfactory, but does not always take account of the challenge needed for higher attainers or the subject matter that might enthuse boys to learn. Teachers give clear instructions in lessons about what the pupils are expected to do, but they do not provide enough chances for pupils to explore their own ideas.

Curriculum provision is satisfactory. The school is at an early stage of reviewing the curriculum to develop links between subjects. At the moment, there are insufficient occasions for pupils to write at length for a variety of purposes and in different subjects.

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. They make reasonable progress, though this has varied between classes over the last few years. Overall, standards are below the expected level as pupils start in Year 1. Inspection evidence shows that the recent reorganisation of the Foundation Stage is leading to improvements.

### What the school should do to improve further

- To improve standards in writing, give pupils more opportunities to write for a variety of purposes, including their own.

- Review lesson planning so that it includes the needs of different groups, particularly boys and higher attainers.
- Provide more occasions for pupils to explore their own ideas and develop independence.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Children enter the Nursery with skills that are below what is usual for their age. They make satisfactory progress in the Foundation Stage though their attainment is below the nationally recommended learning goals by the time they enter Year 1, with a particular weakness in mathematical development. Pupils make reasonable progress in Key Stage 1, although this has been inconsistent over the last four years. In the 2005 national tests for seven-year-olds, standards were below average overall, although reading was better than writing or mathematics. Boys achieved less well than girls. School assessments showed that fewer pupils than average reached Level 3 in writing or mathematics, showing a lack of challenge for higher attaining pupils.

Pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 2. In the 2005 tests, standards in English, mathematics and science were broadly average, although the number of pupils achieving the higher Level 5 was below average in English. School records show that the achievement of this year group was broadly average overall, though only about half of the pupils who reached the higher level in mathematics when they were in Year 2 sustained the higher standard into Year 6. Girls achieved slightly better than boys.

Unvalidated results for 2006 show improvement in standards in Year 6, because of good teaching in this year group. There was some improvement in Year 2, although a comparative weakness remains in the number of pupils achieving the higher level in writing and mathematics.

Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress because of the effective support they receive. The very small number of pupils at an early stage of learning English achieve similarly to their classmates.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development is good and their well-being is promoted well. Nursery children are well-settled and happy. The school teaches pupils successfully how to be safe and develop a healthy lifestyle. Pupils behave well in and around the school and have good attitudes to their work. They say that they enjoy their time in school because, 'the teachers make lessons fun.' The staff foster good working relationships with pupils so that there is little interruption to lessons. However, they do not offer enough opportunities for pupils to develop independence in learning. A learning mentor and a behaviour support worker have helped many pupils to improve their attendance and it is now above average. They have also helped some pupils learn how to behave in school, and raised other pupils' self-esteem. This progress adds to pupils' satisfactory

preparation for their future lives. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. They learn the difference between right and wrong and how to get on effectively with other people. Pupils make a good contribution to the school community in fulfilling a variety of roles of responsibility, including as playground 'buddies' or school councillors. They also play a part in the parish, and collect significant donations for charity.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching and learning are satisfactory and occasionally good in Years 5 and 6 and the Nursery and Reception classes. A school councillor said, 'The best thing about the school is the teachers.' Parents say that there have been many changes in staffing in the recent past and they welcome the current staffing stability. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported effectively to make satisfactory and sometimes good progress towards their learning targets. Support staff make a good contribution here. Lessons run smoothly based on good working relationships between staff and pupils, although pupils do not have enough opportunities to work independently. Teachers' lesson planning is satisfactory but does not always challenge higher attaining pupils sufficiently. The staff's assessment of pupils' work is satisfactory and they mark pupils' work regularly, although the quality of marking is variable. Some staff have adopted new guidance to involve pupils more in judging their own learning and this helps them to understand their own progress. In good lessons, there is pace to the learning with a buzz of interest and enjoyment, and all pupils have work that engages and challenges them. There is a sharp focus in staff development on improving standards in writing, particularly for boys. This is having some effect in lessons, but pupils often do not have enough time or reasons to write at length.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum is satisfactory. There is a two-year rolling programme of topics to meet the needs of pupils in mixed age classes. There is a suitable emphasis on developing basic literacy and numeracy skills, although these are not always applied to solving problems or in other subjects. The school is examining ways to develop more links between subjects, creating more reasons for writing for a variety of purposes. The provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is satisfactory and they make sound progress in the targets in their individual education plans. Provision for the needs of higher attaining pupils is less structured and so they do not always achieve as well as they can.

The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. The good emphasis on personal, social and emotional development helps them to develop a good attitude to school from an early age.

A sufficient range of visits and visitors to school and a variety of extra-curricular activities enhance learning.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall, but care is good. Parents and pupils agree that the school is a safe place. All statutory requirements to safeguard the pupils are in place. Pupils say that there is always someone to turn to if they need help. Vulnerable children and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported. The staff ensure that pupils' personal development is good, and the additional support from staff funded through the Excellence in Cities project is very effective. Academic guidance and support are satisfactory. Whilst this helps most pupils make the progress they are capable of, some boys and higher attaining pupils are not expected to push their learning far enough.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The acting headteacher and his deputy have been successful in providing stability for pupils and staff during a time of significant changes.

Their evaluation of the school's work is largely accurate and is based on a thorough analysis of all the available information. The findings have not yet been fully translated into specific strategies for improvement and so have not yet had a significant impact on standards, particularly writing.

Curriculum coordinators are now being given time to monitor standards and teaching in their subject more closely, though this is at an early stage. The school has received valuable advice from a variety of sources and now needs time to adapt this to the specific needs of the school.

Governance is satisfactory. Governors have accepted the responsibility of making some difficult decisions, taking account of the best interests of pupils and staff. They recognise the need to establish a sustained, settled period for the school.

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The school has made reasonable progress since the last inspection, though the issue of improving writing remains. The improvements shown in the most recent statutory tests in Year 6, as yet unvalidated, indicate a satisfactory capacity to improve.

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## 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>	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
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	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	3

<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.

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School, Burnley

Holcombe Drive

Burnley

Lancashire

BB10 4BH

19th October 2006

Dear Pupils

Thank you for making Mrs Havard, Mr Jackson and myself feel so welcome when we inspected your school recently. We were pleased to see how well you behaved in lessons and when playing outside. We know you enjoy school because the school councillors told us so, and most of you come to school regularly. In fact, the number who take time off from school is getting smaller and smaller, so keep up the good work.

We know there have been quite a lot of changes recently but the adults in charge of the school have tried to make sure that it continues to do its best for you all.

To make the school even better we have asked the teachers to think about a few ideas. These are:

- to give you more time to write in English and in other subjects, such as history
- to plan more challenging work for those who find work less difficult than others and think of topics that the boys might find more interesting
- to give you more chance, sometimes, to choose what you might want to learn about so that you can become more independent.

You can help by working hard, particularly in writing.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Shirley Herring

Lead Inspector