

# Boston St Mary's RC Primary School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	120615
<b>Local Authority</b>	LINCOLNSHIRE
<b>Inspection number</b>	291799
<b>Inspection date</b>	6 June 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Geof Timms

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	206
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr J Poucher
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs S J Lammond
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	17 September 2001
<b>School address</b>	Ashlawn Drive Boston Lincolnshire PE21 9PX
<b>Telephone number</b>	01205362092
<b>Fax number</b>	01205352725

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

The school is an average size primary school. As it is a Catholic school, pupils attend from across Boston and the surrounding area. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is well below average. There is a increasing proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. These pupils are mainly from Poland or Portugal, with a small number from Indian, African and Chinese heritages. A small number of these pupils have English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is broadly average, although there is an above average number with statements of special educational needs entitling them to extra support. Pupil mobility is higher than average, often due to parents having temporary posts at a local hospital. The attainment of most children when they enter the school is broadly in line with that expected for their age. The school has a range of awards such as Investors in People, Healthy Schools, Basic Skills Award and an Activemark for work in sport.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good school that prepares pupils effectively for the next stage in their education. There are some outstanding features especially in the way the school helps pupils' personal development and their well-being. One parent summed up their view by saying 'St Mary's is a wonderful school with high moral values and kind and caring staff.'

The school is successful because it is well led by the headteacher and the senior management team. They share a common vision and achieve a good balance between an academic education and a high level of care for the pupils. The school is good at evaluating its strengths and also aware of the areas requiring further improvement. Above all, the focus is on doing the best possible for all pupils. This can be seen in the outstanding way the school targets resources, works with external agencies to support pupils and provides extra staff time for specific aspects of its work. For example, after an analysis of pupil progress, extra staffing, outside support or enhanced resources are used with those most in need. Because of this, these pupils make good progress and achieve well. The school makes excellent use of its links with other agencies and provides good value for money.

This efficient use of the available resources is partly responsible for the good achievement evident in English, mathematics and science. Children make good progress in the Reception class and by the time they start Year 1 nearly all have achieved, and significant number have exceeded, the expected levels. Particularly good progress has been made this year by all pupils, including the high proportion of the class who speak English as an additional language.

Progress in Years 1 and 2 has been inconsistent over recent years due to staffing changes and a high number of pupils with learning difficulties in some cohorts. The current picture at the end of Year 2 is of satisfactory and improving achievement, and standards broadly in line with those found nationally. However, standards in reading and writing are still not high enough. In Years 3 to 6, progress in English, mathematics and science is good. In the last national tests at the end of Year 6, standards were well above average. They were exceptionally high in English. A high proportion of pupils reached levels above those expected. The attainment of the current year group is similarly good. Pupils with learning difficulties make excellent progress because of the highly skilled support they receive.

The good achievement evident is due to good teaching and learning, and pupils' outstanding attitudes towards school. They behave extremely well in and out of classes and are interested and involved in all lessons. They thoroughly enjoy school greatly and one said 'The teachers are all friendly and fair - they understand and listen.' Pupils say they feel safe in school and develop an excellent knowledge of how to keep safe and healthy. They play an extremely effective part in the local and wider community and also take on a high level of responsibility within the school. Opportunities to work collaboratively are growing and with good basic skills, pupils are being well-prepared for life beyond school. Teachers are very effectively supported by a strong team of teaching assistants.

Although teachers are aware of the progress made by their pupils, the school has only recently developed effective whole school tracking systems which enable senior staff to highlight the progress made by classes, groups or individual pupils in a manageable way. They do not yet use these systems or the data available to analyse closely where pupils learn successfully and where there is underachievement.

The school is continually seeking to improve further and all adults there are working very hard to achieve this. The improvements made since the last inspection have been effective in raising standards. The willingness to address areas of weakness and the good involvement of governors in supporting and monitoring the school, show that the school has a good capacity to improve further in the future.

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

- Raise standards in reading and writing by the end of Year 2.
- Ensure the new systems for assessing and tracking pupils' progress are fully used to analyse progress and identify areas for improvement.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Most children starting at the school are quite mature in their attitudes. The school assesses their needs early in the Reception year and ensures good progress through an appropriate range of activities. By the end of the year children are well prepared for the National Curriculum. Standards at the end of Year 2 are usually above average but these fell steeply in 2005, due to the reasons mentioned already. This fall has been halted and standards have begun to rise again, especially in mathematics and science. In reading and writing, standards in Key Stage 1 are still too low and the school has an action plan to address this. Good progress is made through Years 3 to 6 and standards at the end of Year 6 are consistently well above average. They are high because so many pupils reach a level above that expected in English, mathematics and science, and attain the challenging targets set for them.

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

### **Grade: 1**

Personal development is outstanding because pupils have excellent attitudes towards their school work. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding, and recognised as such by the parents. Pupils get on exceptionally well with each other and pupils talk about the absence of bullying and the way those from all backgrounds and races are happily accepted in the school. Their behaviour is excellent. The school council is a mature and articulate group who clearly love the role and are very annoyed when their school suffers from, for example, outside vandalism. Other opportunities for taking responsibility, such as peer mediation, are taken willingly and make an excellent contribution towards the pupils' personal development. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to stay healthy and safe. Attendance is above average and this reflects how much pupils thoroughly enjoy being at school.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

The teachers work well together. They are an effective team and are willing to try new ideas and share good practice. Parents and pupils are full of praise for them. They are very well supported by the headteacher and senior management team who work hard to ensure teachers are well resourced and training opportunities are useful. Teachers give freely of their time for clubs, visits and other activities. They have excellent relationships with the pupils who respond well to instructions. Lessons are often interesting and active, and teachers are making effective

use of the available technology. Assessment is satisfactory overall. The teachers are introducing some new assessment methods which are yet to be fully embedded in their everyday practice. The teaching assistants offer excellent support, especially for those pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities, and to those at an early stage of learning English.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is well-planned and appropriate for the age of the pupils. Recent changes to planning are ensuring that a more topic-based approach is used. Good links have been made between subjects and helped pupils see how skills learned in one subject can be transferred to another. The school provides excellent support for pupils with learning difficulties and those with English as an additional language. As well as providing extra support where necessary, the curriculum is appropriately modified and the work targeted at their specific needs. This has just recently been extended to include those with specific gifts and talents. There is a very good range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities, many of which give pupils good opportunities to meet and work with those from other schools.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The school provides pupils with a high level of care. Safeguarding arrangements meet government requirements and child protection procedures are in place and up to date. First aid and health and safety matters are dealt with appropriately. The pupils say there is no bullying or racist incidents and they firmly insist that they feel safe in school and are happy that there are adults who they would turn to if worried or unhappy. The teachers' marking of pupils' work is satisfactory and often helps children understand how they can improve. The recently introduced target setting systems are also helping pupils to know what they have to do to reach the next level. New tracking systems have been introduced to help staff analyse progress and recognise individuals or groups of pupils who are not making sufficient progress. These are yet to be fully utilised and there are aspects of the assessment process, such as linking the marking to what pupils are expected to learn, which are yet to be embedded in teachers' day-to-day practice.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The headteacher provides strong, clearly focused leadership. She sets the tone for what is a very caring school but also one with good achievement. She has high expectations and communicates this well to staff and pupils. She has created a hard-working and effective senior management team, and they are having a clear impact on improvements. The school has been very effective in making use of external networks to help improve provision and raise standards. The work of the learning mentor, for example, has helped the progress of a number of pupils with social or emotional needs. The governing body are highly supportive of the school and many governors have close links. The monitoring undertaken by governors helps them to be effective in relation to their particular areas of responsibility. The school's own monitoring of its work is good and results in useful areas for improvement.

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## Annex A

## 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>
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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	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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	2

### 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>	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2

<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	2
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

7 June 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Boston St Mary's RC Primary School, Boston, PE21 9PX

Thank you very much for the welcome you gave me when I visited your school recently. I especially want to thank the school council members I met, and those children I sat with at lunch. You all helped me find out about your school and you were very polite, helpful and articulate.

One of the things the school is really good at doing is helping you grow into friendly, very well-behaved and enthusiastic learners. You told me how much you love school and how well all the adults look after you and help you learn. Your parents agree and I saw that this was true from my visit.

You work hard and this helps the staff teach you new things. You also work and play well together, in classes or in shows like Joseph. I wish I had been there to see it! Because you work so hard you make good progress, learn lots of new things and reach high standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science by the time you leave the school. Even so, I think the school is right to want to make the standards in reading and writing, especially by the end of Year 2, even higher.

You told me how helpful you found the teachers' marking of your work. This and the other assessments they do help teachers to set you targets that will help you reach the next level. The school has found new ways of keeping a check on how well you are doing. This data will help staff find out who is doing well and who may not be doing as well as they could so that support can be provided.

I think the school is outstanding in helping those of you who find learning more difficult or are learning to speak, read and write English for the first time. You make excellent progress because of the support the school provides and the excellent way it links to people and resources outside the school

Once again, thank you for your help during my visit. Keep working hard and enjoy your time at St Mary's!

Yours sincerely

Geof Timms

Lead Inspector