



St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School, Richmond

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 121655
Local Authority North Yorkshire
Inspection number 292191
Inspection dates 28–29 November 2006
Reporting inspector Les Schubeler

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Cross Lanes
School category	Voluntary aided		Richmond
Age range of pupils	4–11		North Yorkshire DL10 7DZ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01748 822365
Number on roll (school)	166	Fax number	01748 821124
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Fr D O'Neill
		Headteacher	Mr A Brook
Date of previous school inspection	5 March 2001		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
4–11	28–29 November 2006	292191

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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 Catholic primary school. Most pupils are of White British heritage and live in Richmond or the immediate surroundings. However, significant numbers of pupils leave and join the school during each year, often only staying for a limited period. Slightly less than a quarter of the pupils are from Catterick Garrison with parents in the armed forces. Pupils for whom English is an additional language account for about 5% of the school population.

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 knows itself well. Accurate self-evaluation has enabled it to identify weaknesses and to take appropriate action to bring about improvement. Effective action on issues identified in the last inspection has raised the quality of teaching and established a good system to track pupils' progress through the school. Consequently, there is a good capacity to take the school further forward. The leadership team and active governing body share a determination and commitment that ensures the school provides good value for money.

Pupils achieve well. They enter St Mary's, having had a wide range of pre-school and nursery experiences. They settle in quickly and, as a result of stimulating teaching in the early years, they lay the foundations for making good progress through the school. A large number of pupils arrive at and leave the school during each year, but, like those pupils who stay the full course, they achieve well because they are well taught and well supported. By the end of Year 6, overall standards are above average. There are particular strengths in mathematics and science, but in English not enough pupils reach the higher level in the national tests.

Pupils enjoy school because relationships are very secure. Pastoral care is of high quality. It ensures a secure environment and provides effective support that enables a significant number of pupils to overcome the barriers to learning that they face. The school's mission statement is at the heart of much of what the school does. Adherence to it helps to create a secure, happy environment in which pupils flourish and prepare themselves well for the future. The curriculum serves the needs of the pupils well. Pupils and parents value the opportunities provided by experiences such as residential visits to Borrowdale that broaden the pupils' horizons. A sound range of out of school activities contributes to pupils' progress, enjoyment and personal development. However, many pupils say that they would relish greater opportunities to learn new skills and broaden their experiences.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The good relationships that pupils enjoy with one another and with other adults ensure positive attitudes develop rapidly. Teachers know their pupils very well and make sure that they are suitably challenged. The school recognises that more still needs to be done to use assessment more effectively in everyday classroom teaching so that more pupils have a better understanding of how they can improve their work.

The headteacher and his deputy headteacher give a clear direction to the school. Everyone in the school understands the principles that underpin all school activities and the focus is on helping pupils to give of their best at all times. There are effective systems for tracking the progress of individual pupils. Data is well used to identify levels of attainment accurately. Until now, too much of the management of the school has remained in the hands of the headteacher and his able deputy headteacher. The contribution of other staff to the school development plan is limited. Well-considered changes are being made to the management structure. The senior leadership team is being expanded and there are appropriate plans to involve more staff in the monitoring

and evaluation of the school's performance. But, because these are at a very early stage, and the monitoring through the school is as yet still focused largely on the headteacher and his deputy headteacher, the full impact of changes has not been felt.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the use of targets to identify how pupils can improve their work, particularly in improving results in the English assessments at the end of Year 6.
- Ensure more effective sharing of responsibilities among all members of the senior leadership team.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils start school with skills that are broadly average. Thanks to good teaching in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, they quickly develop their skills, knowledge and understanding and make such good progress that by the end of Year 2, they reach standards that are above average. In spite of the potential disruption that could be caused by a significant number of pupils who stay in the school for a limited period, pupils continue to achieve well in Key Stage 2. By the end of Year 6, standards are above average overall. They are significantly above average in mathematics and science, where a high proportion of pupils reach the higher Level 5. Early indications from 2006 data suggest a further strengthening of performance in these subjects, especially at the higher level. However, in English the picture is not so positive and results do not generally match those in the other subjects. Although results remain above average, they have fallen in 2006. Higher attaining pupils produce work in lessons and in their exercise books that is of high quality, but the proportion of pupils who reach Level 5 in national tests is below average.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development are good. Pupils develop a good understanding of what it means to have a healthy lifestyle through eating and drinking healthily and through good opportunities for regular exercise. Pupils behave well in lessons and playtimes are sociable occasions. Minor incidents of weaker behaviour occasionally occur in the playground after lunch, but they are effectively dealt with. Pupils demonstrate responsible attitudes in their dealings with others. This means that they feel safe at school and are confident in their abilities to deal with risks and potential hazards. They listen well to other pupils whilst they express their views. Members of the recently established school council take their roles seriously, and are beginning to contribute to the improvement of life at the school. For example, they have been instrumental in fundraising to provide play equipment for wet break times. Pupils' good basic skills, combined with the school's effective emphasis on developing each pupil's personal qualities, mean that they are well prepared for their secondary education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

There are good relationships between staff and pupils. As a result, most pupils enjoy learning and achieve well. Teachers are knowledgeable about the subjects they teach. Regular assessments provide teachers with data which they analyse carefully in order to match activities well to pupils' needs.

Teaching in the Foundation Stage is lively, interesting and supportive providing children with very good opportunities to make choices, work in groups and to acquire essential skills.

Lessons in the main school are well planned with a clear focus and an appropriate structure that helps pupils to learn in graded steps. Occasionally where the pace of some lessons slows, the attention of a small minority of pupils drifts and so does their learning. Teachers generally mark the pupils' work well. However, some inconsistencies across classes result in some pupils being unclear as to how well they are progressing towards their targets or how they might improve.

Teachers are well supported by other adults, who work well with pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and with the small number of pupils for whom English is an additional language to ensure that they can take part in lessons and achieve well in relation to their starting points.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum serves the needs of all pupils well, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who stay for a limited time. There is good provision for literacy and numeracy, which includes withdrawal classes for gifted and talented pupils. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is well planned and enables children to make good progress in the development of their communication and social skills. Provision for information and communication technology has improved since the last inspection report and is now good, helped by productive links with St Francis Xavier High school that benefit pupils in Year 6. Good arrangements are also made with the same school for a bridging curriculum in English and mathematics so that pupils are well prepared for entry into Year 7. A range of sports activities is offered to pupils outside the classroom that encourages the adoption of a healthy lifestyle. However, pupils say the limited number of out of school clubs available to them frustrates them.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

This inclusive school pays good attention to the individual needs of its pupils. As a result, it provides good care and support, enabling them to do well. However, there

is more work to be done on making sure that the guidance that pupils receive allows them to know how to improve their work. Parents are appreciative of the support provided by the school for pupils with medical problems. Clear, appropriate risk assessments are made to safeguard pupils on school visits. The school has also made appropriate efforts to ensure that everyone who works in the school is checked for suitability. Pupils are confident that any concerns or worries are dealt with quickly and sensitively. The school works well with a range of specialists to identify and meet the needs of pupils with particular learning difficulties and/or disabilities and to support learners who are more vulnerable.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher has a clear vision for the future of the school and is committed to raising standards further. He is ably supported by his deputy headteacher. They have a good understanding of all the children in their charge and the school copes very well indeed with those whose stay in the school is temporary. As a result, they have created a climate in which the success of individuals is recognised and celebrated by all. As the school's monitoring and evaluation processes have developed, the need to devolve some responsibilities has been recognised as desirable. The management system is being restructured in order to extend the senior leadership team and to involve more staff in the school's self-evaluation. Weaknesses identified at the time of the previous inspection have been successfully addressed. For example, a programme of lesson observations and lesson demonstrations has resulted in greater sharing of good practice and the quality of teaching and learning is much improved. Thorough, effective monitoring systems that track pupils' progress are firmly in place. Governors fulfil their duties responsibly by supporting or challenging the leadership team as appropriate.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
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

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ 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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
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	2

The quality of provision

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

¹ 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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave to Mr Wilson and me when we visited your school recently. We would like to thank you for being so courteous and friendly. We enjoyed talking to you and finding out your views of the school. We spent a lot of time finding out how well you learn in your lessons, looking at your work and talking to your headteacher and staff. We came to the conclusion that St Mary's is a good school.

These are the things that we think are very good.

- Throughout the school you make good progress because your teachers know you well and make your lessons interesting for you.
- Your school cares for you and looks after all of you very well, including those of you who stay for a shorter time than others.
- The school keeps you safe and healthy.
- You enjoy school and get on well with one another and with all of the adults in the school.

We think two things in particular could be improved.

- Some of you who are already doing well in your English lessons could do even better in the national tests.
- More teachers should work with the headteacher to help the school to improve.

We hope that you will continue to enjoy school and to make good progress. Most of all, we hope that you will carry on working hard and helping all the staff to make St Mary's an even better school.