

Maryvale Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103426
Local Authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	298522
Inspection dates	15–16 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Anthony O'Malley HMI

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	219
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Oakley
Headteacher	Barry Desmond
Date of previous school inspection	9 May 2006
School address	Old Oscott Hill Kingstanding Birmingham B44 9AG
Telephone number	01216 751434
Fax number	01216 756581

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

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

Description of the school

Maryvale is an average sized primary school with a Nursery. When children start in the Foundation Stage their skills and knowledge are just below those found nationally. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is below the national average. When the school was inspected in 2006, it was given a Notice to Improve because it was judged to require significant improvement in relation to achievement and standards, the quality of teaching, and leadership and management.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

Maryvale Catholic Primary School now provides a satisfactory education for its pupils and has greatly improved since its last inspection. Staff are committed to taking the school forward and the momentum for further improvement is there.

Children in the Foundation Stage receive very effective teaching and make good progress. Achievement is good, particularly in language and mathematical development, by the end of Reception. The rate of progress slows in Years 1 to 6. Standards are average by the time pupils leave the school. This is satisfactory achievement overall. Achievement is lower in mathematics than in English or science because pupils spend too long practising skills they have already learned and have insufficient opportunities to apply these skills to activities which require thinking and reasoning.

Teaching and learning have improved and are now satisfactory. Pupils have noticed the improvement. One commented, 'Teaching is better because it is more interesting and more fun'. Not all lessons are this good but some pleasing features are regularly found. These include opportunities for interaction through paired discussion and lively active learning. In less successful lessons, pupils' progress slows because misunderstandings are left unresolved or expectations of what more able pupils can achieve are too low.

The school's greatest strength is the pupils' good personal development. Pupils love coming to school, are enthusiastic and their attendance is good. They behave very well and instances of bullying are rare and dealt with quickly. Pupils lead healthy lifestyles and know how to keep safe in school and at home. They make a positive contribution to the community, for example, through the school council and their generous fundraising. They are developing skills which prepare them adequately for the next steps in their education.

The school acknowledges that there is still work to be done improving the satisfactory curriculum. There has been a strong focus in Years 1 to 6 on improving achievement in English and mathematics. The priority given to these subjects has restricted achievement in some other areas. The school recognises the need to review its curriculum balance, and to ensure that other subjects are given a higher profile and are used to develop literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology skills.

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. The school has improved academic guidance greatly since the previous inspection. However, some health and safety procedures lack rigour and the pupils are understandably unhappy with the condition of their toilet facilities.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher and his senior leadership team have a sound understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Good support from the local authority has been crucial in developing their capacity to secure and sustain this improvement. The leadership team know what needs to be done to improve performance because data is analysed well. Systems for checking on the quality of teaching and the curriculum provide an accurate picture. Governors are supportive and hold the leadership accountable for the school's effectiveness. They do not, however, ensure that all statutory policies are in place and put into practice.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the most effective teaching strategies are promoted across the school.
- Improve achievement in mathematics by giving pupils more opportunities to use and develop their numeracy skills.
- Implement systems for checking that all statutory policies and safety procedures are in place and are being carried out.
- Improve the pupils' toilet facilities. A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement in the Foundation Stage is good and the children reach, or exceed, the expected levels in all areas. From Years 1 to 6, progress slows but is satisfactory. Standards are average. Recently introduced systems for identifying pupils who are underachieving enable the school to target additional support and measure its impact. This is helping to ensure that achievement of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is satisfactory.

The most significant improvement has been in the increasing proportion of pupils now writing at higher than expected levels. In 2006, no pupils attained the higher level in writing in the national tests. The work in pupils' books and the school's own data reveal strong gains in this area. Pupils do not do as well in mathematics as they do in English and science. The school is focusing its efforts to remedy this by ensuring that teaching is stimulating and the targets set are challenging.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy school and take part enthusiastically in their lessons. Relationships are strong because the school's Catholic ethos helps them to empathise with the needs of others both in the school and wider community. Pupils have well developed spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. They know how to keep healthy and participate in a good range of physical activities during and after the school day. The school council gives pupils a voice and members influence aspects of the school's work. Pupils feel that school leaders listen, although on occasions they do not think their requests are dealt with quickly enough, for example, the delay in improving the school toilets. The pupils work well collaboratively and are confident to show initiative. These attributes, and the satisfactory progress that pupils make in literacy and numeracy, prepare them adequately for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning varies in quality and this affects pupils' progress. Learning is best in the Foundation Stage because teachers have a good understanding of how young children learn through play. In the rest of school, there has been a considerable improvement over the past year. Lesson planning is now at least adequate because teachers make better use of assessment data. This is helping to meet pupils' needs more effectively. Pupils are clear about what they

are learning. The challenging individual targets and group targets help pupils to take greater responsibility for their learning. Pupils really like them. In some lessons, progress is restricted when misconceptions are not resolved or when there is insufficient challenge for more able pupils. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities progress as well as the rest. Their progress is good when adults supporting them are thoroughly briefed in advance about the lesson.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school recognises the need to review its curriculum balance and ensure that there is good provision in all subjects. In the Foundation Stage, the curriculum is good. Despite limited opportunities for outdoor learning, the children make rapid progress because the staff skilfully balance teacher directed activities with opportunities for the children to learn through play. Many of these activities fire the children's imaginations. In Years 1 to 6, there has been a strong focus on improving achievement in English and mathematics and a consequent reduction in the attention given to other areas. There is an adequate range of educational visits and school clubs to enrich the curriculum. The older pupils clearly value their four day residential experience and judge that it adds considerably to their personal development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school has significantly improved academic guidance since the previous inspection. Pupils of all ages speak confidently of their targets and understand how they help them achieve. The marking policy has been reviewed, and increasingly pupils benefit from comments that help them understand how well they have achieved and how they can do even better. Pupils feel safe and secure at school and relationships are very strong. Child protection procedures are in place. However, there is not enough vigilance in implementing health and safety policies and the pupils deserve better toilet facilities.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher provides satisfactory educational direction. With effective support from the senior leadership team, he has successfully ensured that pupils now make sound progress. As one parent wrote, 'The school has certainly improved since the inspection of last year'. This is the result of a much stronger focus on the quality of teaching and learning. The proportion of good and better teaching still needs to increase but the gains already made are evidence of the leaderships team's capacity to achieve this. Good partnerships have been established with the local authority to help the school become more effective. Systems for monitoring and evaluating the impact of these partnerships have improved and there is an accurate understanding of the school's present effectiveness. Governors continue to be supportive and are increasingly holding the school's leaders accountable for its performance. The school has not met legal requirements to ensure that a Race Equality Policy is in place and regularly reviewed.

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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>	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?	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	2
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

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ 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

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	3

The quality of provision

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

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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

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

16 May 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Maryvale Catholic Primary School, Kingstanding, B44 9AG

Thank you for being so friendly and helpful when we came to see how well your school is doing. We really enjoyed talking to you and looking at your work.

You told us how much the school has improved over the last year. We agree with you. This is the reason so many of you enjoy coming to school. Your work is improving. The school is really careful now that it keeps an eye on how well you are doing and takes action to ensure that you all make the progress that you should.

Your headteacher and other staff have worked very hard to make your school better. It is now a satisfactory school. This means that it has more good things about it than weaknesses. All staff look after you and make sure you feel safe. As a result, you are very well behaved and try hard with your work.

We have asked the staff and governors to do three things that will make your school even better. Firstly, we have asked that all lessons help you learn well so that you are making good progress all of the time. Secondly, we have suggested that it is important that you do as well in mathematics as in English and science. Thirdly, we have asked the governors to make sure that all important policies are in place. Finally, we can assure you that the governors are as concerned as you are about the condition of the toilets. Like you and them, we would like to see them improved as soon as possible.

We wish you all the best in the future. Keep up the good work.

Yours sincerely

Anthony O'Malley HMI Lead inspector