

# St Mary's Catholic Primary School (Maltby)

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	106940
<b>Local Authority</b>	Rotherham
<b>Inspection number</b>	309269
<b>Inspection dates</b>	29–30 January 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Stephen Hardwick HMI

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>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	193
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Aden Wass
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ms Catherine McLaughlin
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 March 2004
<b>School address</b>	Muglet Lane Maltby Rotherham South Yorkshire S66 7JU
<b>Telephone number</b>	01709 812611
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## Introduction

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

## Description of the school

St Mary's is an average-sized primary school that draws most of its pupils from Maltby, a small town to the east of Rotherham. Most pupils are White British; eight pupils have English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is above average, as is the percentage who have learning difficulties or disabilities. In 2006, the school gained the Activemark and an award as a healthy school.

## 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. The pupils make good progress: they enter with levels of attainment that are below, and in some cases well below, those typical for their age and they leave Year 6 with standards that are similar to the national average.

This progress stems from the good quality of teaching. Particular strengths in the lessons are the teachers' preparation and subject knowledge, the clarity of the learning objectives, and the frequent checks on the pupils' understanding. The curriculum is also good. It covers all the required subjects, gives important emphasis to basic skills and is enriched by a wide range of additional activities.

The school's Christian foundation underpins its work. The pupils are safe and well cared for, and good provision is made for their personal development. There is a determination that each pupil should succeed, with careful attention given to meeting each pupil's needs. The pupils enjoy school, behave well and they are suitably prepared for their future, for instance in the way they accept responsibility and pay regard to the needs of others. They work hard and understand what they are aiming for in lessons, but they are sometimes uncertain of their longer-term targets, and marking often lacks guidance on how they can improve.

The headteacher gives a strong lead. Her vision for the school is shared by the staff and governors, who provide good support. The school's plans for development are based on well-judged priorities. There is a thorough programme for monitoring, which gives the school an accurate view of its performance, albeit with modesty about some aspects of its work.

Where practicable, good progress has been made on the issues raised when the school was inspected in 2004; for instance, in the greater consistency in teaching and the higher results in English. The school's all-round strengths give it good capacity to go on improving. It provides good value for money.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Provision in the Foundation Stage is good. The pupils make good progress from their low starting points to reach standards that are just below those expected for pupils as they enter Year 1. The Foundation Stage unit is well organised, with a wide range of activities, both indoors and outdoors, that cover the required areas of learning. There is an appropriate balance between tasks that pupils choose for themselves and those that are led by adults. The pupils settle quickly into the daily routines; they behave and cooperate well and enjoy what they do. The adults are skilful at taking learning forward, for instance in the lively teaching of early literacy skills such as learning the names and sounds of letters.

## What the school should do to improve further

The school's plans recognise the main priorities for improvement, for example the relatively weaker aspects of standards. In addition, the school should:

- Improve the quality of marking so the pupils know what they need to do to improve and how well they are meeting their targets.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

The pupils make good progress during their time at St Mary's. They enter the Foundation unit with levels of attainment that are below, and in some cases well below, those typical for their age and they leave Year 6 with standards that are average.

The school's results in national tests are similar to the national average at both key stages. Over time, the pupils' performance at Key Stage 1 has been slightly stronger in mathematics than in English, whereas the reverse is the case at Key Stage 2. In 2007 at Key Stage 1, almost all the pupils reached the basic standard expected for seven-year-olds in reading, writing and mathematics, and around a half reached the higher levels. At Key Stage 2, overall, nine tenths reached the basic standard expected for 11-year-olds and a third reached the higher level. The pupils make average progress during Key Stage 2, with no significant differences in the gains made by different groups.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Personal development and well-being are good. Pupils enjoy school, behave well and cooperate maturely in class and in the playground. They work hard in lessons and contribute enthusiastically. Attendance is similar to the national average. The school has effective strategies to promote good attendance and punctuality; for instance, through establishing two 'walking buses' and awarding prizes for classes in which all pupils are on time for two weeks.

Pupils are well aware of the importance of a healthy lifestyle. After-school sports clubs are popular and the pupils take full advantage of the fruit scheme at break, as well as the lighter options offered in school lunches. However, some pupils' packed lunches have less healthy food in them. Pupils say they feel safe. They said that some bullying used to take place at dinner time but since playground activities were introduced this has disappeared because, as one pupil put it, 'We are all too busy having fun.'

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength in this school, as reflected in its strong Christian ethos and the close links with the church. Assemblies are well conducted, and enable pupils to reflect on their own circumstances and the needs of others. The pupils contribute well to the wider community, for example by mounting a concert for local residents and through much fundraising for charities. They have a say in decisions which affect them in their work and play through an elected school council which has been instrumental, for example, in improving playground facilities. The pupils are well prepared for their future in their attitudes to work, in their relationships and in their basic skills. Last year the school held a 'world at work week', during which older pupils met with adults from different professions to begin to look at possible careers.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are well planned and prepared, based on the teachers' strong subject expertise. Learning objectives are clear and discussed with the pupils, who thus know what to do and what they should achieve. Good use is made of individual whiteboards,

so all the pupils give their own answers and teachers are able to check on the levels of understanding. Lessons are well paced and sequenced, enabling pupils to build on what they have already learned. Appropriate allowance is made for the range of ability in each class; for instance, by allocating additional help where it is needed or varying the tasks. Teaching assistants are carefully directed and make a strong contribution to lessons.

The pupils are attentive, work hard and learn good routines. They readily collaborate to share ideas. Almost all show interest in what they do and they are keen to answer the teachers' questions, but a small number of the oldest pupils need cajoling into action.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good. It meets requirements and the needs of the pupils. There is good provision for literacy and numeracy and pupils commented on their particular enjoyment of art and 'music box'; one pupil said, 'Music box is the best lesson of the week as I want to be a musician when I leave school.'

Visits from people representing historical characters, artists and story tellers all help to make the programme of work broad, balanced and rich. Older pupils also benefit from French lessons and the opportunity to take part in a residential visit. Teachers use a good range of approaches to make learning interesting and exciting and to support pupils' personal development. The needs of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities are well catered for through specific work and sensitive support from teaching assistants.

Pupils participate enthusiastically in a wide range of sporting activities within after-school clubs. They commented that they would like more arts-based clubs, but also said they would like the forthcoming pantomime to last all year!

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The school's care and support for pupils are very good, as is the guidance for their personal development. Procedures for safeguarding are robust and follow the government's recommendations. Trusting relationships are a characteristic of the school. The pupils are very confident that they can turn to any adult in school if they need help. Support for the pupils who have learning difficulties is good: they follow carefully tailored education plans and valuable links have been established with other agencies, for instance, to help pupils with particular behavioural difficulties. Similarly, the pupils with special talents benefit from a partnership with a neighbouring secondary school.

The pupils' progress is tracked closely and in detail, with regular assessments to check that pupils are achieving what they should. The pupils have well-judged personal targets, usually as part of a group, but they are sometimes uncertain about them. The marking of pupils' work, though diligent and encouraging, too rarely tells pupils what they need to do to improve or how well they are meeting their targets.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

The headteacher gives a strong lead to the school, enabling it to move forward securely. She is ably supported by the senior staff, who carry out important functions well. They lead on initiatives, such as improving writing, organise training sessions and observe and feedback on teachers' classroom practice.

There is a shared vision for the school's future and much teamwork, though communication among the senior team depends more on informal meetings than on systematic checks by all on the actions outlined in the school's plans.

The school's development plan is detailed and based on well-judged priorities that stem principally from an analysis of pupils' standards. The programme for monitoring the school's performance is comprehensive; it includes observations of lessons, checks on pupils' work and termly assessments to gauge how well pupils are progressing. Appropriate action is taken on the outcomes; for example, currently, to tackle a relative weakness in mathematics. The monitoring provides a secure basis for the school's accurate evaluation of its work. In avoiding complacency, however, there is a prudent tendency to underestimate what is being achieved.

Governors are closely involved in school and fulfil their responsibilities well, bringing a valuable range of expertise to their roles. There are good links with other agencies and schools, particularly the secondary school to which most pupils transfer. Parents, through their answers in questionnaires, are overwhelmingly supportive of what the school offers their children.

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**



## Annex A

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

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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

<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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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**

Many thanks for the help you gave us and the welcome we received when we came to inspect your school recently. This is what we found.

St Mary's is a good school. You told us that you feel safe and well cared for, and that you enjoy the opportunities you have in lessons, on the playground and at events such as the pantomime. You are taught that exercise is important and what sort of food is healthy, though this was not reflected in everyone's packed lunch. You were almost always very well behaved, listened to your teachers and were keen to answer questions.

You make good progress at St Mary's and leave well prepared for secondary school. This is because of your teachers' careful planning and preparation so your learning builds from lesson to lesson. Your teachers keep a close check on how well you are doing. You have appropriate targets to aim for, though some of you needed to remind yourselves what these were. We also think that you would be helped if your teachers gave you more written comments on your work, so you are sure about what to put right and how to improve.

All the adults in school work hard to give you a good education. Your parents told us how much they appreciate what the school does for you. Your headteacher, Ms McLaughlin, has good plans to take St Mary's forward and she is well supported by the teachers and governors. This should stand you in good stead for the future.