

# St Marie's Catholic Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	107113
<b>Local Authority</b>	Sheffield
<b>Inspection number</b>	309317
<b>Inspection date</b>	1 July 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Joyce Taylor

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	270
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Ms F Cunning
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ms Alison Pickin
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 March 2004
<b>School address</b>	Fulwood Road Sheffield South Yorkshire S10 3DQ
<b>Telephone number</b>	0114 2301904
<b>Fax number</b>	0114 2303509

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<b>Age group</b>	4-11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the rates of progress made by pupils across the school, particularly for pupils who speak English as an additional language; the quality of the curriculum and the quality of leadership and management. Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation; national published assessment data; the school's own assessment records; policies; observation of the school at work; discussions with senior members of staff, pupils and governors, and analysis of the questionnaires returned by parents. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

This average sized primary school serves a socially mixed area. Fewer pupils than average are eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is slightly higher than average and an average proportion have a statement of special educational need. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well above average and many of these pupils speak languages other than English at home, with French and Polish being the most common languages. A high proportion of pupils attend the school for short periods of time, arriving in various year groups throughout the school year. The school has gained the following awards: Healthy Schools, Safe Mark, School Travel, Eco School Silver, Smoke Free Sheffield and Healthy Choices.

## 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 and some aspects of its work are of high quality. Pupils receive an effective education and under the strong leadership of the headteacher, senior staff and governors there are good opportunities for pupils to develop as confident and successful learners. This is evident in the improvements in pupils' rate of progress, their outstanding personal development and the excellent quality of care they receive. The school's caring atmosphere and high ambitions for its pupils result in focused and enjoyable learning and above average attendance. Parents talk enthusiastically about the 'family feeling' in the school and how impressed they are with the range of learning opportunities provided for their children.

Children arrive in Reception with a very broad range of skills, but overall their attainment is below the expected level. Pupils leave Year 6 with standards that are above average. Effective teaching ensures that achievement is good and in all year groups the most able pupils reach extremely high standards. The school teaches reading very effectively and the vast majority of pupils make very good progress in this subject. The school's improved assessment systems accurately indicate how quickly individual pupils are learning, and show that many pupils are making faster than average progress. As a result, in English, mathematics and science the current Year 6, which includes a high proportion of pupils who came to the school fairly recently and speak English as an additional language, have built strongly on their starting points. Standards in writing across the school, while average, are lower than other aspects of English.

At the time of the last inspection standards were average and assessment data was not used effectively enough to speed progress or ensure inclusion. The school has responded well to remedy these weaknesses and continues to work hard to ensure that all pupils, regardless of their cultural or religious backgrounds, make good progress. In 2007 the standards in Year 6 dipped in science and mathematics. This concern has been resolved in some classes through introducing more practical, fun approaches to learning that have improved pupils' confidence. Pupils now exceed their challenging targets. Pupils work with teachers to identify how well they are doing and what they need to learn next. Pupils declare with confidence whether or not they understand new ideas and are ready to move forward. The school provides strong support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Very detailed information about them is gathered and it shows how effectively these pupils are encouraged and how closely their work is monitored. As a result, their achievement is good.

Relationships between adults and pupils are very effective. A typical view, expressed by younger pupils, is, 'We love our teacher because she takes care of us.' Parents particularly value the way older pupils look after younger ones. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding with pupils demonstrating particularly strong cultural harmony and understanding. Extremely well planned opportunities to provide time for pupils to reflect and express their thoughts and feelings ensure that they have time to discuss concerns and take account of the needs of others. Pupils' behaviour is good overall. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to stay healthy and their understanding of acting safely, for example when moving around school or out on visits, is extremely thorough. Their outstanding personal development and their good academic achievement contribute strongly to supporting their future economic well-being.

The curriculum is good. An effective mathematics week showed pupils how much they could enjoy solving problems in different situations. Pupils say how pleased they are to learn different

languages, such as French, Italian and Spanish and they love taking their learning outside, into the school's attractive grounds. An outstanding feature of the curriculum is that in some classes it is planned in an extremely innovative way, linking subjects together through very interesting, practical tasks. The Eco School project and information and communication technology are used to support learning in other subjects, for example, with pupils enthusiastically contributing to the 'blog'. Some of this work extends into contact with other schools where pupils are able to comment on each other's work. These activities excite pupils' interest, increase their involvement and, as a result, they learn very effectively and produce work of a particularly high standard. However, activities of this quality are not provided for pupils in all classes and ensuring that they are is a priority for the school. An interesting and very popular range of after-school and lunchtime clubs are provided, including wide ranging sports groups, music and theatre clubs.

Effective leadership and management are provided by the headteacher, senior teachers and governors, who form an efficient team and set very challenging targets for improvement. Extremely effective links, developed with other schools and the outside community, have helped the school move forward. The previous inspection reported that subject leaders did not provide enough support for other teachers. This weakness has been resolved, resulting in good developments in the curriculum and in pupils' standards. The leadership team has an accurate view of the school's performance overall but is too modest about the school's effectiveness in some cases. Appropriate procedures are in place to promote health and safety and child protection. Parents have confidence in the school and the views expressed by many of them reflect their gratitude to the staff for ensuring that their children enjoy learning and progress well. Governors are challenging and persistent in their support of the school and know how well it is doing. Together with teaching and support staff, governors contribute to the feeling of enthusiasm and friendship that permeates the school. The school gives good value for money and has a good capacity to improve further.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

While some Reception children start with very advanced skills, most children join the Reception class with skills that are below those expected for their age in aspects of communication, language and literacy, knowledge and understanding of the world, and in mathematical calculation. Parents report that their children settle extremely quickly and love school. Learning opportunities in Reception are stimulating and challenging and children have many opportunities to choose and discuss their play and work. Children learn well, often becoming very involved in activities. For example, children were observed using a supply of large cardboard boxes to make musical instruments and one group set about constructing a violin with great determination. An example of very skillful intervention by staff ensured that children gained an understanding that maracas needed to be sealed so the 'noisy bits do not fly out when you shake them'. Children's enthusiastic participation occasionally results in a rather noisy atmosphere, but the adults' management of this ensures that it does not interrupt learning. The thoughtful learning opportunities and the effective teaching ensure that children's achievement is good. Their progress is tracked closely and lessons are planned to support identified areas of weakness as well as stretch children as learners. By the time they move into Year 1, children are working securely at expected levels in all areas.

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

- Raise standards in writing.
- Ensure that the innovative curriculum found in some classes is provided in all.

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## 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?	1
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	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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
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

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?	1

<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	1
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

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**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for your help when I visited your school. I very much enjoyed watching you work and talking with you. Special thanks should go to the school council, who joined me for lunch and talked with me about what you are doing. They told me that your school is good and I agree with them. It gives you many different opportunities for successful learning.

One of the really good things about your school is the way you all get along together. I was also impressed that you know exactly how well you are doing and know what you need to learn next in order to get even better. You try hard in lessons and concentrate extremely well even though your work is difficult. Your headteacher knows how well the school is doing and she knows what to do to make things even better. Your teachers and classroom assistants are dedicated and very hardworking and some of them are trying out extremely exciting ideas to make the learning particularly interesting for you. I have asked your school to make sure that all classes are given such interesting activities.

Your parents say they are very pleased you come to this school because it takes such very good care of you and helps you learn. You told me you like looking after each other and I could see that you enjoy your lessons, you behave well, you are very polite and extremely kind to each other. I know you like to take part in helping the school to get better, so I have suggested something that you can help to do. Your writing is not as good as your reading. This needs to be resolved and I have asked your school to think of ways to help you improve.

You are enthusiastic about your school and I hope you carry on making St Marie's Catholic Primary School a happy place to learn.