

Saint Mary's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112901
Local Authority	DERBYSHIRE LA
Inspection number	311043
Inspection dates	12–13 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Roger Fry

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	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	177
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Monsignor Jonathan Moore
Headteacher	Mrs Patricia O'Hara (Acting)
Date of previous school inspection	13 October 2003
School address	Gladstone Street Glossop Derbyshire SK13 8NE
Telephone number	01457 854 486
Fax number	01457 854 473

Age group	5–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

St Mary's Catholic Primary is smaller than average. The school draws pupils from across Glossop and the surrounding area. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds. A very few pupils are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational need, is broadly average. The proportion known to qualify for a free school meal is above average. The school has been led by the acting headteacher this year.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

St Mary's Catholic Primary School provides a satisfactory and improving standard of education for its pupils. Children achieve well in the Foundation Stage because their individual needs are met in lively surroundings. Pupils achieve satisfactorily overall and are on course to reach above average standards in English and mathematics in Years 2 and 6 this year. Since the last inspection, standards in Year 2 have been mostly above average in reading, writing and mathematics, as teaching has been consistently good. Standards have been broadly average at the end of Year 6 because the changes in staffing have disrupted teaching and learning. Standards in science at Key Stage 2 are lower than in other subjects, as pupils do not have enough opportunities to practise their investigative skills. Pupils who find learning difficult make steady progress across the school because they benefit from programmes that boost their progress, such as in English. Pupils' academic skills learned during their time at school prepare them soundly for the next stage of their education.

Pupils' personal development is good. Relationships are positive, hence pupils enjoy school and each plays an important part in school life. The pupils elected as school councillors are proud of the contribution they make. They have made positive suggestions about improvements to the playground and more recently about safer car parking for parents. The care for pupils is good. Parents made many positive comments, such as, 'Saint Mary's is a friendly school with a strong feel of family and community.'

The teaching is satisfactory overall and some elements are good. Teachers and their assistants help pupils learn by introducing new ideas and reinforcing their knowledge. Pupils make the best progress where teachers are entirely clear about the knowledge and skills pupils will learn in each lesson. In some lessons, pupils make slower progress because lesson planning is not clear enough for each group. The curriculum interests pupils. Visits, visitors, instrument tuition and French lessons are enjoyed by very many pupils.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school knows its strengths and weaknesses. Since the last inspection, there has been improvement in the monitoring of the school's work, more recently led well by the acting headteacher. Governors' and subject leaders' checks on the school's work have kept the school moving forward. Investigations have shown that older pupils' more limited understanding of aspects of mathematics has restricted their progress in the past and is still an area for development across Key Stage 2. There has not been enough time for the full effects of recent initiatives to show in pupils' work, but there are positives, such as pupils' continuing good progress in Key Stage 1 and pupils' better progress in Year 6 this year in English and mathematics. Therefore, the school has good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children's attainment on joining Reception is slightly lower than is typically found nationally. Their skills in recognising letters and their sounds (phonics) are below average. Through consistent and well-informed teaching, the great majority leave Reception at the standards expected of five-year-olds nationally in all the areas of learning, and a minority exceeds them. Children achieve well. Adults use a wide variety of ways to help children read successfully. Children learn to spell simple words in interesting ways, such as by adding missing letters to

words the teacher holds up about healthy foods. They were observed being successful in drawing, cutting, operating laptop computers and organising a picnic outside. Children are exceptionally helpful and show great enjoyment in what they do. They grow quickly into new routines, such as working on their own and making decisions during some activities. The provision is well managed and children feel safe and secure.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the consistency of teaching, by ensuring that teachers clearly identify what pupils will learn in their planning for lessons.
- Raise standards in mathematics at Key Stage 2 by improving pupils' understanding of how to solve problems, use fractions and recognize complex shapes.
- Raise standards in science at Key Stage 2 by providing equipment and other resources so that pupils can investigate and experiment at first-hand.

A small proportion of 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

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Pupils, including those who find learning difficult, make satisfactory progress. At the end of Year 2, pupils typically reach above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. They make good progress and are on course to do the same this year. Standards in Year 6 have been broadly average. However, standards in science have been consistently lower than in English and mathematics. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to investigate ideas practically. This year pupils in Year 6 are making satisfactory progress. They are on course to reach their above average targets in English and mathematics, which are challenging. However, pupils' knowledge at Key Stage 2 of how to work out written problems, use fractions and name complex shapes is not as good as their knowledge of other aspects of mathematics. Standards in science this year remain lower than in other subjects.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy coming to school and have positive attitudes to learning. Relationships are good, which increases pupils' confidence and self-esteem and they behave well. Pupils feel safe and secure in school and are confident that there is always an adult to turn to should they have a problem or need help. Attendance is satisfactory. Through acts of collective worship, religious education and a strong programme for personal, social and health education, pupils have a good awareness of spiritual, moral and social issues and of their own and other cultural traditions. Pupils support the world community enthusiastically and regularly raise funds for those less fortunate than themselves. They have a good understanding of the importance of exercise and eating the right foods to maintain good health, and are very positive about physical education and the wide range of after school sports in which they participate. They have several good opportunities to link with the local community, such as by taking part in the 'Glossop Jog' and visiting local residential homes to sing carols.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well and pupils find many lessons are interesting. Pupils enjoy playing percussion instruments in Year 2 and soon learn to play as a group. In Year 6, pupils explore the value of numbers through exciting and purposeful games and make good progress with their understanding of number. Consequently, pupils make steady progress in all lessons but in some, progress is good. In many lessons, teachers are clear about what pupils will know at the end of each lesson, which skills they will have acquired and how pupils will be grouped to ensure that all are well challenged by their work. In a minority of lessons, planning does not make it clear enough what pupils will learn and they make less progress. At Key Stage 2, pupils' work in science does not extend the more able pupils enough, consequently, fewer pupils reach the higher standards of which they are capable. Teachers deploy their assistants well. They make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning because they reinforce ideas, ask pupils relevant questions and prompt responses in such a way that pupils learn faster.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school places suitable emphasis on English and mathematics and this year at the end of Key Stage 2 standards are rising. The science curriculum is less effective and one reason why standards are lower is because pupils have too little equipment to use for investigating ideas themselves. The school is currently modifying the curriculum so that learning is more closely linked between subjects. The curriculum is enriched well with a range of visits, including residential visits for older pupils. There is a wide-ranging programme of visitors to school from theatre groups, representatives of several sports, musicians and a ceramicist. Many pupils learn to play one of a large range of musical instruments and all learn French in Key Stage 2, which pupils enjoy.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

All parents who answered the inspection questionnaire noted that their children enjoy school, feel safe, and are happy and well cared for. Proper procedures for health and safety, physical risk assessments and child protection are in place. The school provides ample support for pupils who find learning difficult and they make satisfactory progress towards their individual targets. There are satisfactory links with outside agencies that provide additional support for pupils when necessary. The school has developed thorough procedures to assess and monitor pupils' academic progress. Teachers use this information well to set targets for individual pupils and groups. The targets are known and understood by most pupils, so that they have a better understanding of what they need to do to improve their work. The initiative to improve teachers' marking of pupils' work has been successful. Pupils receive good guidance that tells them what has been done well, exactly what needs correcting and why.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The school knows its strengths and weaknesses because of the good vision of the acting headteacher, who has worked most effectively to keep the school moving forward during a period of change. Senior staff check on the quality of pupils' work and the findings are used to improve provision. For example, weaknesses in mathematics at Key Stage 2 now receive extra attention in teachers' planning. However, the monitoring system does not focus enough on points for improvement in the teaching to bring about even faster school improvement. The governors make a good contribution to school improvement. They share in school development planning and have a programme of visits to ensure that pupils make the progress that they should, which is increasingly effective. However, the range of worthwhile initiatives to improve the school's performance have not been in place long enough to be fully reflected in pupils' standards of work.

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?	3
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?	3
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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 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	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?	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.

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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	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

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

14 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Glossop, SK13 8NE

It was good to meet so many of you and to listen to your views. This letter is to give you a flavour of what is in my full report.

Here are some of the good features of your school.

- You make a good start to school life in Reception.
- You make steady and improving progress from Reception to Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics.
- You enjoy school because teachers and other adults care for you well and help you to learn.
- Your attention to people around the world who are less fortunate than yourselves is good.
- Your headteacher, the staff and governors work well as a team to improve your school.
- You get on well with one another and your behaviour is good.
- The school and eco councils help the school by making good suggestions for improvement.

The teachers and I have noticed that there are some things that the school can do to improve. I have asked them to do the following.

- Check that every lesson allows you to learn something new and to practice skills you already have.
- Help you to get better at mathematics, such as when solving problems and working with fractions.
- Help you to make better progress in science by developing your investigative skills.

I hope that you will all keep on working hard, particularly in English, mathematics and science.

Roger Fry

Lead inspector