

# St Mary's Catholic Primary

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	112904
<b>Local Authority</b>	Derbyshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	311045
<b>Inspection date</b>	17 September 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Robert Drew

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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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 (total)	105
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	16
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Keith Mastin
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Anne King
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	18 October 2004
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Longlands Road New Mills Stockport Cheshire SK22 3BL
<b>Telephone number</b>	01663 742 412
<b>Fax number</b>	01663 742 412

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and these specific issues: recent trends in achievement; the quality of teaching and learning and the effectiveness of current strategies for raising standards. Evidence was gathered from observations of lessons and pupils' work, parents' questionnaires, interviews with staff, pupils and governors and analysis of extensive school documentation, including its self-evaluation. Other aspects were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no reason to suggest that the school's own self-evaluation was not justified, and this has been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

The school is much smaller than average. It provides primary education with a Catholic ethos for pupils aged 4 to 11 from the town of New Mills and an extensive rural area beyond. Children aged 4 receive Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision in the same class as Year 1 pupils. The overwhelming majority of pupils are White British; their backgrounds vary, but are on balance economically advantaged. Attainment on entry covers a wide range and varies significantly from year to year. It is currently broadly in line with national expectations. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is broadly average but is high in some year groups. It is common for a number of pupils to arrive or leave near the end of Key Stage 2, significantly altering the attainment profile of the class. The headteacher is beginning her second year in post. Awards earned by the school include the Activemark and the Health Promoting School Award.

## 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. It is well led and pupils make good progress. Parents are right to express the overwhelming positive views in the questionnaires returned during the inspection.

Standards are currently broadly average, but represent good achievement by the pupils concerned. 2007 and 2008 test results in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 6 include significant performance at Level 5. At the same time, more pupils than average failed to register a level. These results are heavily influenced by pupils leaving and joining the school near the end of Key Stage 2 and by the small numbers in each year group. Starting points for recent Year 6 groups are below average overall, while the starting points for pupils currently entering Year 1 are slightly above average. The trend in Year 6 results shows a small decline and the school is right to be considering how to reverse the process. Key Stage 1 standards are above average, significantly so in reading and writing.

One reason the school helps pupils make good progress, whatever their starting points, is its skill in gauging individuals' needs. Assessment is thorough and frequent, and leads staff to devise specific support and challenge for pupils. The tracking of pupils' progress has recently become more rigorous. This has prompted the school to boost literacy and numeracy for small groups and to strengthen pupils' study skills and confidence.

Teaching and learning are consistently good and contribute well to good achievement by the school's mixed intake. Progress in lessons is good throughout the school. Planning reliably caters for the wide range of ability in each class, with assessment data well used to set tasks at the right level. Lessons are appropriately paced and encourage the lively involvement of pupils, so that they enjoy learning and find it easy to join in. Classroom assistants are given substantial responsibilities and work very effectively with class teachers. Their support of groups and individuals helps clarify learning, which sustains strong pace and secure progress. Teachers use group or paired work well and their instruction and explanations are clear.

Leadership is strong and effective, and management well organised. The relatively new headteacher is highly accessible to pupils, staff, parents and the wider community. Staff talk of a strong sense of teamwork and high morale. There is increasing clarity about roles and growing accountability amongst coordinators, who are fully involved in setting targets and monitoring standards for their subjects across all year groups. The combined skills of senior leadership ensures a good capacity for further improvement. At present, there is a strong and necessary emphasis on tracking the performance of each individual. There is less focus on how this relates to targets for whole cohorts and national standards. Improved data analysis has sharpened the school's ability to provide for its varied and changing intake, but there is further scope for agreeing a way to re-establish above average attainment at Key Stage 2. The governing body is well informed and provides good strategic advice and support. Link governor roles and events such as the 'governors in school week' have helped them gain increasingly sound, first-hand knowledge of the school. Community cohesion is well served by the school, especially through its strong contribution to events in the town such as the annual carnival and music festival, and through its highly inclusive intake and the active involvement of parents in school life. Large numbers have attended evening workshops on numeracy and literacy, which has supported their understanding and improved their support for their children's learning.

Self-evaluation is reliable in the great majority of judgements the school makes about itself. This includes its assessment that its curriculum and its care, guidance and support arrangements

are good. All statutory requirements concerning safeguarding and child protection are met. A few key aspects of the school's work are better than suggested in its formal self-evaluation form. While the support and guidance for academic progress are satisfactory and improving, pastoral care and guidance are excellent, reflected in the outstanding personal development made by pupils. This is seen in their excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and in the high levels of enjoyment and enthusiasm that pervade the school. Both were illustrated by a religious assembly, devised and led exclusively by pupils, which combined learning, worship and fun with great success. Enjoyment in lessons is a consistent strength and the school's extra-curricular programme gives excellent scope for pupils to learn new skills in sport, music, group work and outdoor survival. Pupils have a good awareness of how to live healthily and safely and make an excellent contribution to school life and that of the wider community. Older pupils in particular run an influential school council, mentor younger pupils and provide valuable playground leadership. Behaviour is excellent.

## **Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

The needs of children in the EYFS are met effectively. The school makes provision alongside that of pupils in Year 1. Staffing ratios and facilities allow the younger children to be taught separately as required, using both indoor and outdoor spaces. The outdoor area has been recently upgraded and children are very enthusiastic about the new Trim Trail. They achieve well. They arrive with a very wide range of prior skills and needs, but accurate evaluation of each individual allows staff to support and promote their development successfully. They leave EYFS with slightly higher than expected standards. From a generally low baseline, boys make particularly good progress in mathematical development. Personal development and well-being are good. Progress towards greater confidence, and social and personal awareness, is secure and substantial, helped by the very favourable child-adult ratios. Staff are also skilful in encouraging pupils, helping them gain friends and work collaboratively. Learning flourishes because there is a good balance of teacher-led and child-initiated activities, and because class teachers and assistants work together effectively and help children to master protocols for classroom behaviour quickly. Staff are good at promoting routines which develop independence of action for the children. Record systems and procedures are all effective in securing children's welfare. All these strengths reflect the fact the EYFS is well led and managed: staff have a clear sense of direction, an obvious care for the children and a very consistent approach.

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

- Make whole-school targets and the national standards for Year 6 more prominent when monitoring pupils' performance, so that staff share a clear picture of how high standards might be and of how to raise them.

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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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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/or disabilities make progress	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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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

## 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	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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



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

18 September 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Mary's Catholic Primary School, New Mills, Derbyshire SK22 3BL

Thank you for the warm welcome I received during my recent visit to your school. I especially appreciate the fact that a good number of you gave up part of lunchtime to come and speak to me.

You are at a good school and you are right to think highly of it. Some of its work is outstanding. It does many things well, in particular:

- it helps you make good progress in your subjects and does this for all types of pupils, including those with learning difficulties and others who find learning easy
- the headteacher leads well and gets strong support from the rest of the staff; governors provide good guidance and advice
- the school is outstanding in the way it helps you mature, take on responsibilities and appreciate the spiritual dimension to life
- your behaviour is excellent and you show real enjoyment and enthusiasm for school.

If the school is to improve further it needs to:

- make more use of information about how you perform compared to other children nationally, so there is even more challenge in your targets and Year 6 results rise above national levels.

I hope you have a very successful year at St Mary's.

Yours sincerely

Bob Drew

Lead inspector