

St Mary's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118039
Local Authority	North Lincolnshire
Inspection number	312790
Inspection dates	26–27 September 2007
Reporting inspector	Jonathan Sutcliffe

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	174
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	to be appointed
Headteacher	Mr Anthony Norton
Date of previous school inspection	1 September 2003
School address	Grammar School Road Brigg DN20 8BB
Telephone number	01652 653355
Fax number	01652 658355

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary is smaller than average. The pupils are drawn from a wide catchment area around the town of Brigg in North Lincolnshire. The proportion of children eligible for free meals is well below average as is the number of pupils identified as having learning difficulties and disabilities. A few pupils have a first language other than English.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This school provides a good standard of education and good value for money. This is how the school sees itself and it is right to do so. As a result of good teaching, pupils achieve well from a starting point that is typical for their age. Effective provision in the Reception class helps the children to settle in very quickly and make good progress. By Year 6, standards are consistently above average overall, especially so in English. Pupils in all year groups achieve well although the attainment of the more able pupils in Year 1 and 2 has fallen over the last two years. The school's curriculum is of good quality with a particular strength in music. Residential and day visits add to curriculum enrichment. The opportunities the pupils have to support their work using information and communication technology (ICT) are underdeveloped.

Personal development is good because everyone is well cared for as an individual. Spiritual development is outstanding; for example, pupils are given excellent opportunities to contribute in whole school assemblies. Pupils adopt a healthy lifestyle, and they feel safe and secure in the school. One pupil told an inspector, 'Bullying is very rare.' Their involvement in the school community is good. They are proud of their work for charities. The school's strong Christian ethos and its close links with the church help pupils to feel valued and develop into confident young people. The above average attendance is a clear indication of how much pupils enjoy school. Parents express strong support for the school and appreciate the very good care provided. One parent commented, 'I am very happy with my children's care and education, and I am looking forward to sending my third child.'

The headteacher, fully supported by his colleagues, leads and manages the school well. There is good management at all levels. A good climate for learning has been established and there is a strong drive for improvement. The school's evaluation of its effectiveness is matched by inspection findings. The school has developed well since its last inspection and has good capacity to improve even further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children benefit from good provision in the Foundation Stage. Their attainment when they enter the Reception class is typical for their age. They work very hard and achieve well by the time they move into Year 1. They make good progress because they are taught well and experience a rich and exciting curriculum. Leadership and management are good because the well-established care, guidance and support children receive is blended with rigorous analysis of how well they are doing academically. Parents are closely involved in their children's early learning and there are good systems of induction from a local nursery. Good attention is given to the children's personal development particularly staying safe and keeping healthy. There are opportunities for them to develop their physical skills but outside play facilities and equipment are limited.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the standards of the more able pupils in Year 1 and 2.
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in ICT in all their learning.
- Enhance outdoor facilities for children in the Foundation Stage.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well and, by Year 6, standards are consistently above average. The good progress made by the children in Reception continues throughout the school. There are no significant differences between the performance of boys and girls. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, and those whose first language is not English, make good progress because they are well supported by teachers and classroom assistants.

Standards at the end of Year 2 are usually above average and achievement is good. Pupils' performance in reading is higher than in writing, mathematics and science. Results in the national tests over the last two years show that fewer of the more able pupils have achieved the higher levels. This is because they are not always given challenging work that is sufficiently matched to their ability.

Standards in Year 6 are above average and most pupils achieve well. Achievement in English, particularly reading, through Years 3 to 6 is consistently good regardless of starting points, gender or learning needs. An impressively high proportion reaches above average levels. Progress is good in mathematics and science although the number of pupils exceeding the level expected in science is closer to the average compared to English and mathematics. The school sets challenging targets for pupils at the end of Year 6 and these were met in 2007.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils like coming to school. They feel secure and happy in their relationships with both adults and each other. They say there is little or no bullying. Their attitudes and behaviour are good. Attendance and punctuality are good with few unauthorised absences. Pupils' moral, social and cultural development is good. Their spiritual development is outstanding, reflecting the school's strong Christian commitment to personal values. Through assemblies, music and drama pupils have very good opportunities to reflect on human achievement and make a personal response. Pupils make a strong contribution to both the local and wider communities. For example, nearly every pupil participates in the North Lincolnshire music and drama festival. Pupils enjoy the opportunities that exist for exercising responsibility and are always ready to take the lead, for example in reading at assembly or performing in front of others. They give generously to charity through donations or special events. Pupils are well aware of the benefits of safe practices and adopting a healthy life-style. Their good basic skills in English and mathematics, allied with their sound ICT skills, promise well for their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good because most teachers have high expectations, teach at a brisk pace, and are energetic and enthusiastic. Consequently, pupils respond well to the challenges set for them. Pupils are encouraged to develop as independent learners, for example by making their own choices about how to conduct a fair test when undertaking investigations in science. Relationships are good. Teachers know their pupils very well; they help to make learning fun and make sure that activities are well matched to pupils' interests and abilities. Occasionally, these activities are not challenging enough to meet the needs of the more able pupils in Key

Stage 1 and tasks do not engage them actively enough in their own learning. Teaching assistants are generally deployed effectively and take an active part in lesson planning and delivery. At times, they are too passive in their support for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and do not take the initiative in offering help. Although questioning is used frequently to check pupils' understanding of what has been learned, it does not always allow time for all pupils to respond. Teachers are beginning to use interactive whiteboards to present lessons in more imaginative and interesting ways but there is not enough use of ICT to enhance pupils' learning in all classes.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum meets national requirements. Programmes that provide for pupils' personal and social needs including their health and safety are good. There is good enrichment of the curriculum from educational visits and visitors. A residential visit to Crich in Derbyshire and a trip to a water park, for example, are good opportunities to promote initiative and team-building. Provision for English and drama is particularly strong with the participation in the local festival. There are excellent opportunities for the pupils to sing and learn a musical instrument. The choir sings to a high standard and all the pupils in one class really enjoy their weekly guitar sessions. The pupils have good opportunities to learn a foreign language. The recent introduction of Mandarin helps foster their cultural and international links. There are limited opportunities for pupils to use ICT in their learning and to exploit the capacity to learn independently that they clearly have. The opportunities for pupils to take part in extra curricular activities are satisfactory. Pupils said they would like more choice such as, an ICT club. Children in the Foundation Stage have limited outdoor facilities to support their learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school's welcoming atmosphere and positive learning environment help children to feel valued and cared for. Parents spoke very highly of the way the headteacher and other adults look after their children, particularly children with learning difficulties and disabilities whose needs are identified at an early stage. Child protection procedures are in place and risk assessments are carried out at regular intervals. The school works well with other agencies to ensure pupils are aware of keeping safe and that children with learning, behavioural or emotional difficulties have good care and support. Effective links with the partner high schools help in transition at the end of Year 6. Support for pupils without a home computer or who have weak ICT skills is satisfactory. Academic guidance is satisfactory. Pupils' work is marked regularly with encouraging comments but there is not always enough detailed guidance to show them how well they are doing and what exactly it is that they need to do to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The head teacher has a clear vision of a caring community in which every child is important. Together with the recently formed leadership team, he has successfully created a positive climate for learning and brought about a drive for continual improvement. As a result, pupils' personal development is good and the pupils achieve above average academic standards by the end of Year 6.

Leadership at all levels is good. Governors fulfil their statutory duties. They oversee all aspects of provision and are well involved with the school. Their role in focusing their visits to school on standards and curriculum issues is less well developed. Curriculum co-ordinators manage their subjects well. Their annual subject audit, which includes a scrutiny of the pupils' work, is thorough and helps to maintain good academic standards.

The school's self-evaluation is good. There is an accurate understanding of its own effectiveness and how it can be improved. The school improvement plan clearly identifies the school's priorities although it does not detail how their progress will be measured. Clear plans for improvement have helped the school move forward at a good pace since the last inspection and ensure that the school is well placed to improve further.

Parent and pupils are given good opportunities to share their views and to contribute to the school's development. Parents are positive about the school and make a good contribution towards their children's learning. One parent said, 'I've never had a day when my two children don't want to come to school - they love it.'

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 ¹ 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?	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	2
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

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?	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

28 September 2007

Inspection of St Mary's Catholic Primary School, North Lincolnshire,
DN20 8BB

Dear Pupils

As you know we visited your school recently to find out how well you are doing. Thank you for looking after us and making us feel welcome. Thank you also for talking to us about your school, the work you have done and how well you enjoy coming to school. You were very polite, helpful and friendly.

What we liked about your school

- This is a good school.
- Your school is a healthy and safe place to be.
- Many of you who have just started school do well and get off to a good start.
- By the time you leave Year 6, you reach better standards than in many other schools because you are taught well.
- You have very good opportunities to do well in music.
- You come to school regularly and enjoy your lessons.
- All staff in the school look after you well.
- Your lessons are interesting and you help each other when there are problems.
- Your headteacher, all staff and governors are working hard to make the school even better.

What we have asked your school to do now

- Make sure that all of you have work that matches your abilities, especially in Years 1 and 2.
- Help to improve your work and skills in ICT.
- Improve the outside play areas for those of you in Reception.

We thoroughly enjoyed listening to you and watching you learn. We wish you all well in the future.

Yours sincerely

Jonathan Sutcliffe

Lead Inspector