

# St Maria Goretti Catholic Primary School, Preston

## Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	119608
<b>Local Authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	313355
<b>Inspection dates</b>	29–30 April 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Eileen Mulgrew HMI

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

---

<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	189
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Father Tim Sullivan
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Diane Gallagher
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 May 2004
<b>School address</b>	Gamull Lane Ribbleton Preston Lancashire PR2 6SJ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01772 700052
<b>Fax number</b>	01772 655368

---

<b>Age group</b>	3–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	29–30 April 2008
<b>Inspection number</b>	313355

---

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

## Description of the school

St Maria Goretti's is a slightly smaller than average primary school with the majority of pupils attending from the immediate area. Since the last inspection the number of pupils attending the school has decreased by 33%. The percentage of pupils eligible for a free school meal is well above average. Most pupils are from White British heritage with a low proportion of pupils in the early stages of learning to speak English. The proportion of pupils with a learning difficulty and/or disability is about average whilst that with a statement of special educational need is below national average. From September 2007 the school was led by an associate headteacher. At the time of the inspection the permanent headteacher had been in post for seven days. The school received Healthy School Status in September 2007.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to achievement and standards in English, mathematics and science and to the curriculum.

Since the last inspection, turbulence in the leadership and staffing of the school has adversely affected school improvement. As a result the rate of pupils' progress has been uneven and slow. The school's results in the national assessments and tests in 2007 show a significant decline in standards at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. At the end of Key Stage 2, standards were exceptionally low and pupils' achievement was inadequate in English, mathematics and science.

Over time, there has not been enough concentration on improving pupils' standards of attainment, leading to weaker performance. Governors have not always had sufficient information to monitor the work of the school and evaluate the effectiveness of management decisions. Recent improvements, however, indicate that the school has a satisfactory capacity to improve. The associate headteacher, brought in by the local authority and ably supported by a senior teacher, led the school well. The good support of officers and consultants of the local authority has assisted all staff and governors in their work and the permanent headteacher has now taken up post. However, most of the actions taken to bring about improvement are very recent and many are not yet fully established. The role of some subject leaders is not sufficiently well developed and as a result they are unable to lead their areas effectively in order to further improve teaching. Progress in some of the issues identified at the last inspection has been slow but is now gathering momentum.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall and some of it is good. However, although this is an improving picture, not enough attention is paid to how well pupils learn. In some lessons teachers use effective and creative approaches to help pupils to learn and gain independence. This is not consistent throughout the school, however, and many teachers rely on worksheets that are not sufficiently adapted to meet the needs of pupils with different ability levels. The school's systems for tracking pupils' progress are relatively new and are not always used effectively by all teachers to plan work. This particularly affects the progress of the more able pupils, whose work often lacks sufficient challenge. Pupils' work is marked regularly but marking does not always tell pupils how to improve.

The curriculum is inadequate and does not fully meet the needs of all pupils. This is because it is not sufficiently well planned to ensure all groups of pupils achieve their best. Strengths in the curriculum include the opportunity for pupils to develop their talents in the activities staff provide outside school hours.

Staff and governors provide satisfactory care and support for the pupils and their families. As a result pupils' personal development is satisfactory. Pupils are polite, friendly and generally behave well. The school has introduced rewards and certificates to improve attendance and there is evidence that absence rates have decreased. The number of pupils who were excluded from school has reduced significantly. Academic guidance is at an early stage of development. Pupils understand the importance of living a healthy lifestyle and keeping safe. Members of

the new school council, all from Year 5, are starting to canvass the ideas and opinions of pupils in other classes. This has already led to the introduction of a 'healthy food bar' at lunch time.

Many parents have been extremely concerned about the performance of the school and a large minority moved their children to other schools in the area. Since January they have shown renewed confidence in the leadership of the school and many feel the school is heading in the right direction.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 3**

Provision in the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception) is satisfactory. Although skills are below those of children of a similar age by the end of the Reception year, children make satisfactory progress in the Nursery and Reception classes. In the Nursery class attention is given to developing speaking and listening skills: for example, an adult engaged a child in conversation about the shapes of fruit and the importance of fruit in a healthy diet during an art activity. Following guidance from the local authority planning has improved. All areas of learning are organised around a central theme, for example, children are exploring the theme of 'people who help us'. Adults establish positive relationships with children so children feel safe and secure. A reasonable balance of activities offers children a degree of choice and allows them to follow their own curiosity: for example in Reception a girl was exploring with play dough to write her name. A focus on letter sounds is helping children to develop early skills in reading and writing. Staff keep notes about children's developing skills but this information is not fully used to guide the next steps in their learning. Although the outdoor area is effectively used to extend learning in the Nursery, the absence of a specified area for Reception class outdoor activities results in missed opportunities to enhance the learning for these children.

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

- Raise standards and achievement in English, mathematics and science for all groups of pupils.
- Improve the effectiveness of subject leadership and middle management.
- Make better use of assessment information to plan work which meets the needs of all abilities and provides the pupils with guidance on how to improve their work.
- Improve pupils' attendance.
- Review curriculum provision to ensure continuity and progression of skills.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 4**

Standards are exceptionally low and achievement is inadequate. Pupils enter Key Stage 1 with knowledge and skills which are below those expected for pupils of a similar age. In the most recent national assessments at the end of Key Stage 1, pupils attained below average standards in reading and mathematics, and well below in writing. The proportion of pupils who gained the higher Level 3 in reading and mathematics was significantly less than the national average and no pupils gained Level 3 in writing.

The results of national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2007 show that standards were significantly below the national average in English, mathematics and science and very few pupils gained the higher Level 5. Significant groups of pupils underachieved. Pupils have not made the progress of which they are capable over the last three years; most especially in mathematics and science. Since September 2007 the school has focused on raising standards and improving

achievement in English and mathematics. Inspection evidence shows that the rate of progress is beginning to improve especially in the current Year 6. However, the rate of progress for all pupils is still too variable and there is still some way to go to tackle the gaps caused by previous underachievement.

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

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, and cultural development is satisfactory. Strong emphasis is placed on the social development of pupils and opportunities for pupils to discuss ideas and work together are promoted. Good relationships exist between adults and children. Pupils enjoy school as can be seen by their improving attendance, although this is still below average. Behaviour is satisfactory and the school has a safe and calm atmosphere in which pupils enjoy lessons, and work and play well together. Pupils value 'golden time', a reward for positive behaviour. Pupils feel secure and understand how to deal with bullying or other concerns. Pupils understand that a healthy diet and regular exercise contribute to a healthy lifestyle and take advantage of the after school activities in sport. Pupils say they value their teachers, their friendships with other pupils and the extra-curricular opportunities the school provides such as art, choir and information and communication technology (ICT). Pupils are making an increased contribution to the community of the school through their work as councillors and as 'buddies' to pupils in the Reception class.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Classrooms have been re-organised so pupils have more resources to support them in their learning. As a result, features of good lessons, mostly observed in literacy, include well-planned, exciting activities to meet the needs of most learners; good use of questions and a swift pace. Where teaching is less good there are prolonged explanations by teachers; ineffective use of worksheets, resulting in pupils losing concentration and interest; slow pace of learning and limited progress. Recent investment in ICT has resulted in teachers using interactive whiteboards to improve teaching activities. Teaching assistants provide effective support in lessons to individuals or groups of pupils who are in need of additional help. Procedures to measure pupils' progress have been set up and progress in reading, writing and mathematics is checked every half term. However, the information collected is not always used precisely enough to plan work for individual pupils. As a result, opportunities are missed to target the work accurately for pupils who need a challenge or for those who need more support.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 4**

The curriculum is not planned well enough to ensure pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding are built upon systematically. This is partly because no one has a complete overview of the curriculum. The current emphasis on improving literacy and numeracy has resulted in a lack of emphasis on other subjects in the National Curriculum. Some curriculum policies are out of date and do not provide relevant information. A review of the curriculum was started in the autumn term and individual teachers have tried linking subjects together to make learning

more meaningful for pupils. However, there are far too few planned opportunities for children to practise and develop the skills learned in literacy and numeracy in different subjects. Pupils value the range of extra-curricular activities provided by staff. Recently formed partnerships with local organisations have enriched the curriculum, for example, through the reading project work with the feeder high school and the sporting activities provided by 'team theme'.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

The pastoral care of pupils is satisfactory. Pupils report that they feel safe at school and are confident that adults will help them with any troubles. Pupils commented on the improvements in the behaviour within the school and appreciate the new rewards system. Bullying and friendships are addressed well through the use of the new resources for social and emotional education. Procedures for supporting pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have recently been strengthened. The school now involves parents more systematically in identifying support and makes effective use of external support to meet the needs of vulnerable pupils. Academic guidance to support pupils to improve their work is less well-developed and less effective. Systems for checking on the rate of progress pupils make have recently been introduced. However, this information is not always used well enough to support, challenge or guide individual pupils. Some pupils report that they know their English and mathematics targets but these are not always linked closely enough to the teaching.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Leadership, management and governance of the school are satisfactory. The school has introduced procedures to evaluate its own performance. The leadership team has identified the school's strengths and weaknesses, and started to work hard to tackle underachievement. However, more remains to be done to improve teachers' planning and use of marking, assessments, tracking information and target-setting so that all pupils, especially the more able and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, are challenged in lessons and make the best possible progress. The new headteacher is committed to raising standards and achievement for all groups of pupils. She is supported in this by the governing body, a senior teacher acting in the role of deputy headteacher, and an enthusiastic team of teachers including several new to the school. The role of coordinators in foundation subjects is not well enough developed to give a clear view of standards or to help them improve satisfactory teaching.

**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
---	----------------

### Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	4
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	4

### Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	4

### 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?	4
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

<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>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4
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	4
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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?	Yes

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

30 April 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Maria Goretti Catholic Primary School, Preston, Lancashire, PR2

Thank you for making us so welcome in your school and for answering all of our questions.

We were impressed with the way you behaved both in school and in the playground. You are friendly, polite and well mannered. You are learning about how to live healthy lives through eating lots of fruit and vegetables, drinking water and taking lots of exercise. You enjoy the activities you have after school and you are happier now that behaviour is better. You understand what you need to do to keep safe. Your teachers are working hard to try and help you to reach higher standards in your work but we feel there is still some way to go. The governors are keen to make your school a better place for you to learn.

However, there are some important aspects of your school that need to get better so we have given your school a notice to improve.

We have asked the adults to:

- Help you reach higher standards in your English, mathematics and science work.
- Help the teachers who lead subjects check you are improving your skills and knowledge in those subjects.
- Make better use of test information to plan work which meets the needs of all pupils and to give you guidance on how to improve your work.
- Encourage all pupils to attend more regularly.
- Plan the curriculum so you can build up your skills and knowledge.

We hope that you will help to make your school an even better place by continuing to try your best in all of your work.

Best wishes

Eileen Mulgrew HMI

Angela Milner HMI