

# St Mary's Catholic Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	125710
<b>Local Authority</b>	Warwickshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	315292
<b>Inspection dates</b>	14–15 November 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	David Mankelow

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	223
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Alexis Yearby
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mary Johnson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	16 May 2005
<b>School address</b>	Pool Road Studley B80 7QU
<b>Telephone number</b>	01527 852140
<b>Fax number</b>	01527 853807

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This average sized school draws the vast majority of its pupils from a wide area around the village of Studley and from nearby Redditch. No pupil is at an early stage of learning English as an additional language but 34% are from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average, although the proportion with statements of special educational needs is above average. Most children's attainment is broadly at the expected level when they enter the Reception Year, but a small minority are below that in writing and calculation skills. A new deputy headteacher began 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: 2

St Mary's is a good school with some outstanding features. The teaching is good in every class so pupils achieve well. Children make good progress in Reception and most enter Year 1 with standards a little above the level expected. Good progress continues in Years 1 to 6, resulting in standards which are above average in Year 2 and significantly above average in Year 6, in English, mathematics and science. A major strength of the school is the exemplary pastoral care. This high level of care results in pupils' excellent personal development which, in turn, contributes to their good achievement. Pupils feel well supported by their teachers and their friends so they are not afraid to make mistakes. Applying the school's motto, 'Learn to love and love to learn,' alongside its strong Catholic ethos and high academic standards, pupils leave the school extremely well prepared for their future lives. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school, a typical comment being, 'My son loves school. After a week's holiday he can't wait to get back.'

Teachers use their good subject knowledge in lessons to ensure that explanations are clear and well understood. They provide stimulating work so pupils are interested and maintain high levels of concentration. For instance, a Year 5 mathematics lesson about co-ordinates involved playing 'battleships' and was introduced by the teacher sharing his extensive knowledge of ships of the Royal Navy. As a result, even the pupils for whom the concept of co-ordinates was difficult made good progress in their understanding. Teachers assess pupils' work accurately and regularly. They mark work conscientiously and supportively, telling pupils how well they have done. However, marking does not consistently give pupils enough information about what they need to do next in order to improve their performance.

The school's curriculum is outstanding. It ensures that the needs of all groups of pupils are well met and is very creative in providing work that captures pupils' interest. For example, pupils talk with excitement about making unleavened bread for their Passover meal. This activity contributed well to their religious education and their understanding of other cultures, and also provided a valuable food technology experience. Such creative activities are planned in all subjects, ensuring that statutory curriculum requirements are met in a stimulating way and that meaningful connections are made between different subjects. There is an extensive range of well-attended out-of-school clubs, including sports, which make a significant contribution to pupils' personal development and excellent healthy lifestyles.

Leadership and management are good overall. The headteacher's ability to inspire all those involved with the school to follow its motto and believe that every child really does matter is outstanding. The new deputy headteacher has brought increased rigour to procedures for assessment, tracking pupils' progress and setting targets for improvement. However, improvements in these systems have not yet had time to impact on raising achievement further. Some pupils are fully involved in setting and reviewing their short-term targets but this is not consistent across the school. Procedures for setting longer-term targets that teachers need to get pupils to reach, for example, at the end of each year, do not make use of the most recent assessment data available. As a result, longer-term targets are not as effective as they should be in raising standards even higher. Senior leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and self-evaluation is good. The school's success in ensuring that pupils achieve well and that their personal development is excellent demonstrates its good capacity to make further improvements.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

There are good induction procedures and the Reception class is very safe and secure so children settle quickly and happily into school routines. Children make good progress in all areas of learning because teaching is effective and there is a good balance between adult-led and child-inspired activities. Good assessment procedures mean that pupils with learning difficulties are identified early and their needs are well met. Children's personal, social and emotional development is especially good because of the level of care provided by all of the adults that they meet. During the inspection, the children attended Mass and behaved impeccably for the whole hour, being particularly inspired by the spiritual dance performed by older pupils. The school is aware of the need to improve the outside area in order to further develop children's physical skills.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Make sure that full account is taken of the most recent assessment information when setting long-term targets for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Ensure that marking and pupils' involvement in setting their short-term targets consistently result in pupils knowing how to improve their performance.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

From their starting points as they enter Year 1, and building on the strong start made in the Reception Year, pupils make good progress in Years 1 to 6. Cohorts vary but standards are generally above average in reading, writing, mathematics and science in the end of Year 2 assessments and significantly above average in the end of Year 6 tests. These standards are confirmed by the work of pupils currently in the school. A small minority of parents are concerned that the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are not identified and met early enough. This is not the case. These pupils, and those with statements of special educational needs, make similar progress to others in their classes because their needs are well met. Pupils with learning difficulties are set targets for small steps in their learning in individual education plans that are regularly reviewed. Teachers provide work that is closely matched to these targets and pupils are well supported by a team of talented teaching assistants who have been specially trained in areas such as dyslexia.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 1

Pupils love coming to St Mary's so attendance is well above average. Pupils' real enjoyment of school was summed up in a typical comment from a pupil who, when asked what he liked most about the school replied, 'Everything, it's just brilliant!' Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They care for each other extremely well, informally and through more structured responsibilities such as being play-leaders. Their spirituality was superbly expressed through movement and singing during the school Mass. Behaviour is exemplary in lessons and around the school. Pupils develop an excellent sense of their own and others' safety and well-being. They have an excellent understanding of other cultures through close links with schools in Europe and further afield.

Pupils make an excellent contribution to the school and wider community, for example by being peer mediators, eco-monitors, reading buddies and through links with the parish. The school council is genuinely effective, for example in improving healthy eating through monitoring how healthy playtime snacks are, using their 'snackometer'. School council members are currently involved in helping to compile the school's disability access plan. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle and take every opportunity to do so, for example through the daily 'activate' sessions that involve physical activity. A typical comment from a Year 6 pupil was, 'Exercise helps to burn off the effects of eating too much carbohydrate.'

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Relationships are excellent in all classes and work is stimulating and well matched to pupils' learning needs. As a result, pupils have excellent attitudes to their work and try to do their best at all times. Lessons are well planned, with clear learning intentions that are made explicit to the pupils. As a result, pupils know what they should have learnt by the end of the lesson. Plenary sessions at the end of lessons are used well to make sure that objectives have been met. Teachers now set challenging, short-term individual targets for pupils but these have not fully impacted on raising standards in all classes because pupils are not always sufficiently involved in setting and reviewing them. Occasionally, pupils spend too long sitting on the carpet before moving off to their activities and this slows the pace of some lessons.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 1**

The school's curriculum is innovative and exciting and makes a significant contribution to pupils' outstanding personal development. Excellent provision is made for pupils with particular gifts and talents so they excel in their specific areas. For example, some individuals really excel in sports activities, where the school is extremely successful in local tournaments. The curriculum is inclusive, with 70% of pupils learning to play a musical instrument. There are many activities that very effectively contribute to pupils' cultural development, for example art weeks and the annual intercultural festival. Information and communication technology is used extremely well to support pupils' learning in other subjects, as was seen in pupils' research for their history topics. Good opportunities are provided to develop literacy and numeracy skills in subjects other than English and mathematics. Excellent provision is made for teaching a modern foreign language.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teachers' pastoral care and nurturing of the pupils is exemplary and contributes to their excellent personal development. Pupils happily share any worries that they have with adults or through the class 'worry box' where they can leave notes for teachers. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils and health and safety procedures are secure and the school places strong emphasis on Internet safety. The school has good links with outside agencies, which are used well to support pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and emotionally vulnerable pupils. Pupils are given good academic guidance in the course of lessons and most work is marked in detail, telling them how well they have done. However, in some classes, marking does not give pupils

enough information about what they need to do next in order to improve their work, and this reduces achievement.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership at all levels very successfully promotes pupils' personal development and has ensured that standards have remained high since the previous inspection. Monitoring and evaluation procedures are good and result in a 'single integrated development plan,' which accurately identifies what the school needs to do next. However, the plan's success criteria are not easily measurable so leaders do not know for certain when objectives have been met. The governors are very effective. They have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and are personally involved in the monitoring and evaluation procedures through their regular visits. They are supportive but also hold the leadership to account for pupils' achievement and personal development. Assessment, tracking and target-setting procedures have been improved recently. Teachers make regular, accurate assessments that are used to set challenging short-term targets but long-term targets do not use the most up to date assessment information. As a result, some pupils' targets are too challenging and others too easy so these targets are not useful in raising standards even further.

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**Annex A**

## Inspection judgements

<b>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</b>	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	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

<b>How good is 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	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
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	1

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	1
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	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.

## 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	3
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

16 November 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Studley, Warwickshire, B80 7QU

You may remember that I visited your school recently with another inspector. Thank you very much for making us so welcome and telling us all about your school. I am writing now to tell you what we found.

You and your parents believe that you have a good school and we agree with you. Most of you love coming to school and one reason for this is that you are given exciting work to do. Teaching is good in all of your classes so you make good progress and reach high standards. The way that your teachers and other adults in the school care for you is excellent, as is the way that you care for each other. You try your hardest in your work and you know that if you get something wrong you will be supported. Your behaviour is excellent and you take responsibility for lots of things around the school. The school council is exceptionally helpful to the teachers and governors. The work you are doing to help them with the disability access plan is particularly valuable.

- We have asked your teachers to do two things to make your school even better:
- take full account of the most recent information on how well you are doing when setting the long-term targets for your attainment and progress
- make sure that when your work is marked, you are told clearly what you need to do next and that you are also helped to improve your work through the setting of your short-term targets.

You can help the school a lot by continuing to work hard and remembering your school motto, 'Learn to love and love to learn.'

I wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

David Mankelow Lead inspector

**Annex B**



16 November 2007

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Yours sincerely

David Mankelow  
Lead inspector