

St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Worthing

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	126042
Local Authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	315409
Inspection dates	17–18 September 2008
Reporting inspector	Janet Watson

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.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	265
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	40
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Matthew Hodson
Headteacher	Cecilia Lewis
Date of previous school inspection	24 November 2003
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Cobden Road Worthing BN11 4BD
Telephone number	01903 234115
Fax number	01903 215034

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is slightly larger than average primary schools. It serves an area with a mix of social and private housing. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average. Most pupils are White British, although a larger proportion than average is from a variety of minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above average.

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, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement.

Pupils do not achieve as well as they should by Year 6. Most children start school with skills and experiences that are typical of their age. They are currently making good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). During Years 1 and 2, pupils' progress is inconsistent and recent standards have fallen below the national averages. Pupils do not make progress at a fast enough rate throughout Years 3 to 6 to improve their performance significantly. As a result, standards by Year 6 are well below average and their achievement is inadequate. The slow progress is due to a lack of emphasis on the acquisition of basic skills, which hampers the pupils' ability to learn independently. Children with moderate learning difficulties and/or disabilities, together with those who are learning English as an additional language, receive sufficient support to enable them to make satisfactory progress.

Pupils' personal development is satisfactory. They have a good understanding of how to lead healthy lifestyles and clearly enjoy being at school. Behaviour is good throughout the school, although a small number of individual pupils receive support from a behaviour therapist. Pupils' awareness of keeping safe is satisfactory. Pupils are confident and have pride in their personal achievements. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is generally good. Pupils enjoy many aspects of working with the church in the local community but although satisfactory, their understanding of the wider community is less well developed.

While some of the teaching and learning observed during the inspection was satisfactory, the quality of work seen in books shows that pupils make insufficient progress over time. As a result, teaching and learning overall are inadequate. Marking does not provide sufficient guidance to help pupils understand what they have to do to improve their work further. There is insufficient equipment for information and communication technology (ICT) for all pupils to develop their skills fully. There are some exciting aspects to the curriculum but provision for developing the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and science is inadequate. As a result, pupils are not developing adequately the skills that will prepare them for their future lives. Pupils participate in a number of external visits and contributions by visitors enrich their learning during the school day. However, the range of extra-curricular activities available to them is limited.

The leadership team has introduced a variety of initiatives to tackle underachievement. Some of these, particularly the 'progress learning review' meetings, are good developments but they are not used effectively as tools for improvement because reviews of actions are not sufficiently regular or robust. The analysis of data is superficial and interventions are not raising achievement at a fast enough rate to improve standards. Governors are generally well informed and are beginning to challenge the school but they have not ensured that government requirements on safeguarding are met. Leadership and management are inadequate and without additional support the school does not have sufficient capacity to make the necessary improvements.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children's skills and experiences when they enter school vary each year but are currently around the expected levels. Good teaching and support enable all children to feel safe, have fun and achieve well. They are making good progress across the areas of learning.

Children in the EYFS are articulate and confident speakers. Parents are welcomed into the classroom and they have good relationships with all staff. Parents value their approachable manner. The curriculum has a good balance of teacher-led and child-initiated activities, and staff plan learning experiences carefully. They make accurate assessments of attainment and use them and the children's individual interests to plan an interesting and relevant curriculum. The outside area is satisfactory and used appropriately, and the school has good plans to develop it further.

The EYFS is well led and managed and there are good links with a wide range of other settings and parents. Staff are well informed about the children before they come in, ensuring a happy, secure entry into the school. Staff communicate well with each other to provide consistent care for all individuals.

What the school should do to improve further

- Analyse data more rigorously to track and improve pupils' progress.
- Introduce robust systems, including a clear monitoring timetable, to check the impact of initiatives and other aspects of the school's work.
- Sharpen teachers' planning to ensure that activities meet the needs of all learners more effectively and improve the quality of marking.
- Ensure the curriculum makes adequate provision for all subjects.
- Ensure that the school complies fully with Government requirements for safeguarding.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Pupils are capable of reaching higher standards than they currently do. From their starting points when they enter school, they leave with standards that are well below average. They do not make sufficient progress during their time at school. As a result, their achievement is inadequate. However, the work seen in lessons shows that pupils are beginning to make faster progress in their learning, but still have much to do to catch up.

Standards in English and mathematics are below average in both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 although standards at the end of the EYFS have been broadly in line with expectations and are improving. Recent booster classes designed to address a weakness in mathematics for a particular group of pupils did not lead to the anticipated improvement in progress. The policy of supporting pupils in class is satisfactory for both those pupils learning English as an additional language and for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities but is not effective for the majority as the planned work does not meet their individual needs well enough.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Behaviour is good and pupils respond well to the school's expectations in lessons and at break times. Assemblies provide a strong spiritual example to pupils, which leads to their good moral

development. Pupils enjoy their learning in a safe and secure environment and are excited about visits, which contribute considerably to their good social development. Plenty of opportunities exist for pupils to care for others when acting as playground 'buddies' or 'talk partners'.

Pupils understand the need for healthy eating and physical activity. They are aware of the diversity of the society in the school and wider communities. Pupils make a positive contribution to the community through local associations and the church. The school council is still relatively new, but its members are proud to represent their classes.

Pupils' successes are celebrated well, which helps to promote their confidence and the ability to show initiative and independence in their daily lives. However these skills do not compensate for the lack of academic achievement which has a negative impact on their personal development and well-being. Parents very much appreciate the attention given to personal development, with the comment of one parent, 'we feel our child is being nurtured', reflecting the views of many.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

The quality of teaching is inconsistent across the school. It is inadequate overall, as pupils do not make sufficient progress. Learning objectives are generic, do not cater for the needs of all learners and are not always shared with pupils. The planning of work and the activities provided do not take sufficient account of the needs of individual pupils, although the level of support for pupils learning English as an additional language and for those pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is correctly targeted. Pupils enjoy their work but it lacks the degree of challenge necessary to extend their thinking. Pupils are unaware of their targets for learning or the levels at which they are working, and so are not clear what they must do to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 4

The curriculum lacks balance as insufficient time is allocated to mathematics and science. Not enough emphasis is placed on developing pupils' ability to write at length. In addition, pupils have insufficient opportunities to develop basic skills in ICT. Some elements of the curriculum, such as the development of interpersonal skills, are making a positive contribution to pupils' personal development. Music is a strong feature of the school's work. There is limited extra-curricular provision, although the positive impact of visits and visitors enhances the curriculum during school time.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 4

The weaknesses in academic support and the poor safeguarding procedures outweigh the good pastoral care provided by the school. Pupils are cared for well in class and around the school. Safeguarding procedures in relation to the updating and administration of policies do not meet government requirements although the school is a safe environment for pupils.

Academic guidance is weak as pupils are not sufficiently aware of how well they are achieving and what they have to do to improve in the future. Some individual targets are shared with

pupils and parents. However, their use is inconsistent across the school and systems for tracking pupils' progress are insufficiently robust.

Leadership and management

Grade: 4

Leadership and management are inadequate because there is insufficient rigour in the monitoring and reviewing of standards and achievement. The absence of a specific timetable for review hampers the accumulation of the accurate data needed to drive school improvement. A number of good initiatives, started last year when the new leadership team was established, have not had the regular, high quality reviews needed to make the necessary impact on improving the school's performance. In addition, the school does not set itself challenging enough targets. The school understands the provision it is making but does not evaluate the impact of that provision with sufficient clarity to ensure pupils achieve their learning potential. The governing body is well informed about the school's performance and is beginning to develop its role in challenging the leadership team. However, governors have not ensured that all statutory requirements are fully met.

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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?	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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	4

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?	4
The standards ¹ 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/or disabilities make progress	3

¹Grade 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

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
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	3
The extent to which 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	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 learners' needs?	4
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?	4

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	4
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	4
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	4
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
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	4
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	No
Does this school require special measures?	Yes
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

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

19 September 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Worthing, BN11 4BD

We very much enjoyed talking to you and seeing your work when we visited your school recently. We want to thank you for spending time with us. We found you confident and polite at all times. This letter is to tell you what we found out.

We think that your school needs more help to ensure that you make better progress than you do at present. Some of the changes that your headteacher and senior staff have introduced are already beginning to make a difference but much more needs to be done. Over the next few months, you will receive regular visits from inspectors to check that the school continues to improve. These are some of the other things that we found.

- You know a lot about how to keep healthy by eating the right food and taking exercise regularly.
- Your behaviour is good and we were particularly impressed with the way you help each other.
- You told us about how the visits and visitors enable you to enjoy your learning.
- Staff help you enjoy your time in school.
- You have helped to make the school a friendly and welcoming place to be.

We have asked the headteacher and staff to do the following things.

- Use the information the school has more rigorously to check your progress.
- Check the school's work more regularly and carefully.
- Make sure teachers' planning and marking help you all to make the best progress possible.
- Make sure all subjects are given enough time for you to learn well.
- Make sure the governors do all the things that they are required to do.

You can help the school improve further by talking with teachers about your learning targets and then making sure you do your best to achieve them.

Yours sincerely

Janet Watson Lead inspector