

St Mary and St Benedict Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	133556
Local Authority	Coventry
Inspection number	316149
Inspection dates	28–29 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Derek Watts

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	319
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Vacant Position
Headteacher	Pauline MacDonald
Date of previous school inspection	3 November 2003
School address	Leigh Street Hillfields Coventry CV1 5HG
Telephone number	02476 229486
Fax number	02476 632241

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

St Mary and St Benedict Catholic is a larger than average primary school. About 40% of the pupils come from a White British background. Other pupils come from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds, with African, Indian and Caribbean being the next largest groups. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well above average and a significant number of these are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above average. A higher than usual proportion of pupils join and leave the school at other than the usual starting and leaving points. The current headteacher and deputy headteacher were appointed in September 2006.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

St Mary and St Benedict Catholic Primary is a satisfactory and improving school that has a number of good features. Pupils' personal development and well-being are good because of the effective care, guidance and support provided. Children in the Foundation Stage get off to a good start and achieve well. Pupils' achievement in the rest of the school is satisfactory. Parents hold the school in high regard and give it good support.

With her staff, the headteacher has created a very positive school climate for pupils to learn in and for staff to work in. This is much appreciated by pupils and their parents. As one parent wrote, 'There is always a welcoming atmosphere'. Pupils enjoy school and this is shown by their keen participation in all activities. They are extremely courteous and friendly, and relate very well to others. The positive values promoted and the high expectations lead to outstanding behaviour in lessons and around the school. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Attendance is satisfactory. Pupils adopt healthy lifestyles well and know how to keep themselves safe. They make good contributions to the local and wider community. Pupils have clear individual learning targets for writing and mathematics, so they know what they are working at to improve. Pupils enjoy the good range of additional activities that enrich the curriculum.

Children in the Nursery and Reception classes get off to a good start because of the effective and exciting provision. The satisfactory quality of teaching and the curriculum in Years 1 to 6 enables pupils to make satisfactory progress. Across the school, teachers have very good relationships with their pupils and manage them well. Instructions, questioning and explanations promote learning effectively. Pupils make good progress when they are sufficiently challenged, and tasks are well matched to their abilities. However, this good, and sometimes outstanding, practice is not consistent in all lessons. Also, some do not move on at sufficient pace, and learning declines because pupils are not fully engaged. Improvements to assessment, target setting and the curriculum are having a positive impact on raising achievement in English and mathematics. Standards in Year 6 are below average in English and mathematics and average in science.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enter the Nursery with knowledge and skills well below those expected for their age. A significant number have limited language and social skills. They quickly settle into routines and make very good gains in their personal development. Good teaching and a stimulating curriculum enable children to make good progress in all other areas of learning. A wide range of activities that are planned around exciting topics such as 'farm animals', 'people who help us' and 'life cycles' motivate the children very well. Teachers and assistants provide an effective blend of adult-led tasks and opportunities for children to explore, be creative and work independently. Not all the areas of learning are fully incorporated into the outdoor activities and the school has identified this as an improvement area. By the end of Reception, standards are below those expected in communication, language and literacy but broadly average in other areas.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise achievement further, particularly in English and mathematics, by ensuring that all lessons are consistently challenging.
- Improve the overall quality of teaching, ensuring the existing high quality practice is more widespread.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Children make good progress in the Foundation Stage. By the end of Year 2, pupils have consolidated what they have learned in the Foundation Stage, although in 2007, standards were below average in reading and writing, and dipped to well below average in mathematics. National test results for Year 6 in 2007 had improved since 2006, but they were still below average overall and pupils were still not making enough progress in mathematics. Across the school, pupils are now achieving satisfactorily in mathematics because of targeted teaching and support, and increased opportunities for calculation and problem-solving.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils show considerable care and respect for others' beliefs and feelings. High and consistent expectations by staff and very positive relationships lead to outstanding conduct. Pupils form very good relationships with adults and amongst themselves. They work well collaboratively in a range of activities. The school works hard to monitor and promote attendance. This is satisfactory and improving. Pupils adopt healthy lifestyles and possess a good understanding of the importance of healthy diets and taking regular exercise. Those on the school council take their responsibilities seriously and have contributed to improving the school environment and playground play equipment. The raising of funds for well-known charities contributes to the wider community. Pupils are reasonably well prepared for their future lives. They have well-developed personal and social skills and a sound base of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Across the school, teachers have established very positive relationships with pupils and manage them well. Pupils are attentive and respond well to their teachers' clear instructions and effective questioning. Good opportunities are given for pupils to discuss their work, particularly in pairs, and this develops their speaking and listening skills well. Some teaching, such as in a very dynamic, challenging mathematics lesson seen in Year 6, is outstanding. However, activities and tasks are not consistently matched to pupils' needs. Some teachers use assessment information effectively to do this, but practice is not consistent in all lessons. In a few lessons, the pace of learning slows when pupils are not sufficiently involved in their learning. Teaching

assistants are effectively deployed and contribute well to learning, particularly for pupils who find learning difficult or are at an early stage of learning English. The marking of pupils' work is constructive and helpful. Teachers' comments praise good work and give guidance on how to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum promotes pupils' personal development well and enables them to make satisfactory academic progress. More investigative and problem-solving work has been introduced to mathematics and science. This is having a positive impact on achievement, but occasionally work is over-directed and pupils have insufficient opportunities to plan and design the investigations themselves. Good use is made of the school's attractive and spacious accommodation and classrooms are bright and stimulating. A good range of additional activities contribute to pupils' enjoyment and interests. Clubs include basketball, dance, computers, football, French and netball. A popular residential visit for Years 5 and Year 6 to an outdoor centre in Wales provides new activities such as caving, climbing and canoeing as well as building pupils' personal and teambuilding skills. Healthy lifestyles and personal safety education are promoted well across the curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Highly effective pastoral care and support contribute well to pupils' personal development. The headteacher and staff know the pupils extremely well and have established very good relationships with them and their parents. A parent commented, 'Staff are always friendly, patient and helpful'. There are very good induction arrangements so that children in the Nursery and those who join later settle quickly. Procedures to ensure pupils' protection and safety are effective. The school has good partnerships with external agencies to enhance the care and support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, looked after pupils and those at an early stage of learning English. Systems for assessing and tracking pupils' attainment and progress have improved and are now good. Assessment information is usually used well to plan teaching. Pupils have clear individual learning targets in writing and mathematics, so they know what they need to do to improve. This target setting has contributed to the raising of achievement.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. A relatively new senior leadership team is well focused on improving provision and raising standards. The school's performance is systematically reviewed and leaders responded positively in tackling the underachievement indicated in the school's 2006 results. Good systems to assess and monitor pupils' attainment have been established. Assessment information is used well to set appropriately challenging targets. The school's actions are steadily improving teaching and raising achievement but leaders are aware that there is more to do before these are consistently good.

The school has a clear view of its strengths and areas for development. Teaching is effectively monitored by senior staff, but teachers are not given sufficient opportunities to observe the

highly effective practice within the school. The school has checked the underachievement of the past few years but there is still more to do before teaching and pupils' achievement are consistently good. The capacity to improve is satisfactory. Governors are supportive and are kept well informed about the school's performance. This enables them to challenge the school constructively.

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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?	3
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	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

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	1
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	3
The behaviour of learners	1
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	3

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?	3
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?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
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	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
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?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

31 January 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Mary and St Benedict Catholic Primary School, Coventry CV1 5HG

Thank you so much for welcoming us into your school and showing us your work. We enjoyed our visit and would like to tell you what we found out. Yours is a satisfactory school with some good features. Teaching is satisfactory and most of you are making the expected progress. Your headteacher and staff are working hard to make the school even better.

These things are strengths of the school:

- you clearly enjoy school
- your school is a very pleasant and positive place to be
- children in the Nursery and Reception get off to a good start
- you are friendly, polite and get on very well with other pupils and adults
- your behaviour is outstanding in and around the school
- a good range of additional activities is provided
- you adopt healthy lifestyles and know how to keep safe
- staff know you very well; they take good care of you and give you very good support
- your parents are very pleased with the school and give it good support. These are the things the school has been asked to improve:
- some of you could make more progress, particularly in English and maths, and the school is working hard to challenge you more to make this happen
- sometimes your teachers could involve you more in your learning and ensure lessons move on at a quick pace. You can help by continuing to behave really well and working hard in your literacy and numeracy lessons. Finally, thank you once again for all your help. We wish you all the best for the future.

With kind regards

Derek Watts Lead inspector

31 January 2008



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CV1 5HG**

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