

# St Mary's RC Voluntary Aided Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	108722
<b>Local Authority</b>	South Tyneside
<b>Inspection number</b>	324823
<b>Inspection dates</b>	2–3 February 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Graeme Clarke

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.

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<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 (total)	273
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Brian Stenhouse
<b>Headteacher</b>	Miss Maria Elliott
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 June 2006
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Ayr Drive Jarrow Tyne and Wear NE32 4AW
<b>Telephone number</b>	0191 4898336

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	2–3 February 2009
<b>Inspection number</b>	324823

**Fax number**

0191 4898338

<b>Age group</b>	3-11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	2-3 February 2009
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This average-sized primary school serves south east Jarrow, a locality with marked social deprivation. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. A well above average number of pupils are eligible for free school meals and an average proportion has learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Early Years Foundation Stage provision is in the Nursery and Reception Years. After-hours care is available for children aged 3 to 11 years who are on the school roll.

## 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. The headteacher, ably assisted by a relatively new senior team, provides very clear educational direction and encouragement for all staff. Their commitment and determination have been vital factors in the school's successful improvement since the last inspection. Pupils thrive because good teaching and outstanding care, guidance and support successfully foster the school's philosophy that every child does matter. The school's contribution to community cohesion is satisfactory. Effective partnerships with the local authority and nearby heritage centres enhance pupils' well-being and enrich the curriculum. Nevertheless, pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to increase their awareness of the diversity of cultures, both in Britain and world-wide. Almost all parents have a very high degree of confidence in the school. One sums up their views: 'I am very pleased with the level of care and guidance my children receive at St Mary's School. I feel both have made fantastic progress. The teachers and headmistress are very approachable and seem to genuinely care about the pupils and the views and concerns of the parents.'

The school has continued to tackle the challenge of improving pupils' achievement and is seeing its work bear fruit. The leadership has established consistent arrangements for carefully tracking pupils' progress and closely tailoring teaching and support for any pupils not doing as well as they should. These procedures lie at the heart of the good, and for some excellent, progress that pupils have made during the past year. Governors too are enthusiastic and determined to improve their role. With the leadership team they set and make good use of challenging targets. They ensure the school rigorously accounts for its work. Their markedly successful improvement over the past two years, and resolve to raise standards and achievement further, point clearly to a good capacity for further improvement.

This is an inclusive school where, when taking every pupil's background and starting point into account, their accomplishments reflect good achievement and personal development. From below, and often well below typical abilities and skills when they begin the Early Years Foundation Stage children make good progress, more so in Reception than in the Nursery. Pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 continue to make good progress to reach standards that are broadly average and on an upward trend. Standards in both Year 2 and Year 6 statutory assessments have improved in recent years and again in 2008. The school's diligent attention to improving writing and science led to an impressive rise in standards in the Year 6 assessments, especially at the higher level (Level 5). Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress overall. Good teaching and attention to improve writing further is paying dividends. Many older pupils currently in school are on track to reach their challenging targets in English and mathematics for 2009.

Pupils have a good grasp of the need for healthy eating and enthusiastically take part in physical activities, reflected by the school's Healthy School and Activemark awards. Pupils feel safe and behave well in lessons and assemblies. They are confident and polite. They enjoy school, are delighted when they do well and happily talk about their friendships. Attendance is average and improving as a result of the school's positive efforts to reward attendance. Pupils contribute well in many ways to their school and wider community. Pupils are satisfactorily prepared for their future.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Staff work well as a team to create a stimulating environment, both indoors and out, so that children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress in their learning and personal development. When children start Nursery their skills are below or well below those typical for their age. Staff help children to learn and develop well, both in activities that adults directly support and those that children choose themselves. There is a good balance between adult involvement and opportunities for children to learn through independent activities. Progress through Nursery is steady but, importantly, opportunities to extend the learning of some children, particularly the more able, are missed and they do not always make the progress they should. Children's progress accelerates in Reception. By the time children leave to move into Year 1 their standards have risen and are much closer to the national level. Most achieve well to reach all the Early Learning Goals and some exceed them. This represents good achievement and reflects good provision. Well established arrangements ensure that children's progress is assessed frequently and enable staff to identify early any child having learning difficulties and in need of additional support. Children's successful personal development is given priority, in keeping with the school's philosophy that Every Child Matters. Welfare is promoted well. Adults know the children well and ensure they are safe and properly cared for during the day and in the after hours provision. Children learn how to keep themselves safe, for example, they settle quickly and soon learn to follow well established routines. The separate facilities for Nursery and Reception are coordinated well and effectively managed. Leadership is particularly effective and has minimised the effect of staffing difficulties. Parents are delighted with the way their children settle and value the very positive relationships the school establishes with them.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the progress made by more able children in the nursery.
- Raise pupils' awareness of British and international cultural diversity to enhance personal development and contribute to community cohesion.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

From the time they join the school pupils make good progress and achieve well. The new senior leadership team's determination to raise standards has led to improvement year-on-year. Results in the 2008 statutory assessments for Year 2 and Year 6 continue a trend of improvement over the past three years. Most pupils entering Year 1 have reached the early learning goals set for them. Standards are rising in Key Stage 1 and pupils are achieving well, particularly in reading and mathematics where standards are just above average and on an upward trend. As a result of diligent attention to improve, standards in writing, mathematics and science rose impressively in the Year 6 assessments for 2008. They are broadly average in terms of the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level (Level 4) in English, and above average in mathematics and science. Higher attaining pupils' standards at the higher level (Level 5) improved markedly in all subjects, especially science. The school met its challenging target for English and exceeded it in mathematics. Although boys did not do as well as girls in writing, both did equally well in mathematics and science. The school has rightly sustained its attention on improving pupils' writing. Its work is paying dividends: pupils' standards in the current Year 6 show improvements in writing to the same level as in reading. As a result of very effective support, closely aligned

to pupils' particular learning needs, pupils with learning difficulties made good progress overall and in writing and excellent progress in reading and mathematics.

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

### **Grade: 2**

The personal development and well-being of pupils are good. The school successfully fosters caring relationships and a very positive ethos in lessons and assemblies, which successfully promote pupils' spiritual welfare, moral and social development. Although pupils' cultural development is satisfactory, their understanding of other cultures and ways of life beyond their locality is currently not so well developed.

Pupils have a good understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle. The school's high priority on the safety of its pupils leads to levels of bullying that are low; pupils are confident that any incidents are effectively addressed. They also have a good understanding of safe use of the internet. Pupils behave well in lessons and considerately in the corridors and on the playground where they value the areas set aside for quiet socialising or energetic play. Pupils work hard and become thoroughly involved in lessons, which they clearly enjoy. Attendance is average. Pupils make a good contribution to school life and the local community. Many take responsibilities which make a noteworthy contribution to the school community. Playground buddies enhance friendships and school councillors have promoted improvements to the grounds and fostered cycling to school. They actively support many charities. Their broadly average basic skills and experience of enterprise activity satisfactorily develops their economic awareness and preparation for the next stage of their education.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Consistently good teaching has led to pupils making good progress. Teachers give very clear explanations so that pupils understand what they have to do and work conscientiously. Teachers have good subject knowledge and their lessons are well structured so that they build on pupils' earlier work. Occasionally though, lesson resources are not chosen sufficiently well to suit pupils' different abilities. Teachers use a wide range of strategies, such as group work and research, check learning regularly and help pupils to evaluate their own work. Lessons proceed at a lively pace which holds pupils' attention. Teaching assistants give good support to pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Pupils enjoy their learning, work with commendable endeavour and, in turn, make good progress. Teachers mark pupils' work diligently and frequently. Their comments are encouraging and constructive. They help pupils know how well they are doing and give them clear pointers for improvement.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The good quality broad, balanced and relevant curriculum gives priority to developing literacy and numeracy imaginatively through many subjects. This creative approach to planning topics also enhances key skills like information and communication technology whilst allowing other subjects to be studied in depth. Weeks in which themes are emphasised, such as health and well-being, and enterprise, add variety and contribute strongly to pupils' personal development. Visits to local heritage centres, residential outward bound activities, visitors' contributions and

after-school clubs and sporting activities all enrich pupils' experience. Year 6 pupils plan, cost and complete risk assessments for an enrichment trip to a park and take part in an annual country hike, all of which enhances their preparation for their future. Specialist music and foreign languages teaching, together with opportunities to take part in theatrical productions, develops pupils' talents and enhances their cultural development. However, they have few opportunities to develop an understanding of multicultural Britain and global diversity.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils benefit greatly from the outstanding care, guidance and support the school provides. Pastoral care is a considerable strength. Pupils say they feel safe and well looked after. This is because the school has well-founded and understood procedures which properly protect and carefully support pupils. Effective measures for safeguarding children are in place, such as those required for child protection, recruiting staff, health and safety and risk assessment for visits and activities. The school has exceptionally effective procedures for analysing information about pupils' work to precisely identify any specific difficulties they have. In turn the school provides close and sharply focused support to pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, or those slipping behind. As a result almost all make good progress and some make outstanding progress, especially in reading and mathematics. Crucially, pupils receiving intensive support are not excluded from learning with their classmates. These arrangements lie at the heart of the school's success in fostering good achievement for all its pupils.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Good leadership and management very successfully promote the school's caring ethos and the positive climate for learning that is evident throughout. The headteacher and new leadership team, together with the governors, show great commitment and resolve to improve the school. Their diligent and rigorous approach to set and meet challenging targets has improved standards and led to good achievement. The school gives good value for money. Governance is good. Governors gain a very clear knowledge of the school through an effective partnership between leaders and themselves. Their joint approach to review and evaluate the school's work leads to key priorities in a well thought out development plan for raising standards and improving pupils' personal development. Governors and leaders successfully promote many partnerships which foster pupils' well-being and their contribution to their school and local community. Their approach to fostering community cohesion is largely satisfactory rather than good because pupils have insufficient opportunities to increase their awareness of the diversity of British and world-wide cultures. The drive and energy given by good quality leadership and management are entirely responsible for improving achievement and standards, and for successfully dealing with the issues raised at the last inspection. There is a very strong team spirit to develop the school further.



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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?	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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### 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?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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
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	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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?	1

## 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	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
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

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

4 February 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Mary's RC Voluntary Aided Primary School, South Tyneside, NE32 4AW

Mrs Elton, Mr Hall and I really enjoyed our visit to inspect your school. Thank you for helping us when we came into your classrooms and assembly to see you at work. You were very polite and helpful and we did enjoy talking with those of you whom we met. I know the headteacher and all the staff are very proud of you. We were delighted to see how much you like to take part enthusiastically in activities during and after school, how you value the friendships you make and the help you get. You are well behaved and polite to others in lessons and around the school. We were pleased to see how you contribute to school life, for example as school councillors, and how you help others through the many charities you support.

Your school gives you a good education. It is warm and welcoming and well organised. All the adults in the school look after you exceptionally well and that is why you feel safe and happy. Last year many children in the Nursery and Reception class made good progress, especially in Reception. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 also made good progress. I noted that the test results for pupils in Year 2 were higher this year than last year. The Year 6 results also showed an improvement, especially in the number of pupils who reached Level 5. We were especially pleased that the arrangements to help those of you who are struggling a little help all involved to do really well. We like the way your teachers tell you in your books how well you are doing and how you can improve. We did, however, find that you do not have enough opportunities to learn about how people in other parts of Britain and the rest of the world live.

I have asked the school to make sure that those of you in the Nursery who can make faster progress do so. I have also asked the school to give you all more opportunities to find out about the many different cultures we now have in Britain, and to understand about how people live in different parts of the world.

You have very many opportunities at St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School to learn about life and these should stand you in good stead for the future. I hope that you all do really well.

Yours faithfully

Graeme Clarke

Lead inspector