

# St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Morecambe

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	119622
<b>Local Authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	327089
<b>Inspection dates</b>	5–6 March 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Joe Clark

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>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	181
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 Peter Whittaker
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Steven Thornton
<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>	Coniston Road Morecambe Lancashire LA4 5PS
<b>Telephone number</b>	01524 413032

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	5–6 March 2009
<b>Inspection number</b>	327089

**Fax number**

01524 425990

**Age group** 4-11

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**Inspection dates** 5-6 March 2009

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**Inspection number** 327089

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a smaller than average size school. The vast majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds and have English as their first language. Pupils come largely from areas of socio-economic disadvantage. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average but the proportion with a statement of special educational need is well above average. A new headteacher has been appointed from 1 September 2009.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school which looks after its pupils well, effectively promoting their personal development and providing good levels of personal support and satisfactory academic guidance. 'I have never known a more caring school', 'The staff are friendly and have the children's interests at heart', 'St Mary's has been a blessing to us as a family', were typical of many parental comments. Pupils' behaviour is good. They get on well together and have positive attitudes to learning. A good curriculum effectively supports pupils' personal development. Pupils take part enthusiastically in the many enrichment activities the school provides, for example, in dance. The good range of sporting and other activities available at the end of the school day are well attended. Pupils enjoy coming to school and their attendance is good. They say they feel safe in school, where bullying is an extreme rarity. Relationships between each other and with adults are excellent. Pupils know about the importance of adopting a healthy lifestyle and keeping safe. They enjoy taking on responsibility and make a good contribution to the smooth running of the school. Preparation for the next stage of learning is satisfactory.

Pupils join Year 1 with broadly average standards. Except in mathematics, where pupils underachieve, they make satisfactory progress as they move through the school and by the end of Year 6 are achieving standards which are average in English and science but below average in mathematics. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make the same satisfactory progress as other pupils. More able pupils could achieve higher standards at the end of both key stages. This group of pupils underachieves partly because teaching and learning, although satisfactory overall, and with some strengths, does not focus enough on their particular needs. This is because not enough use is made of assessment information to provide the correct level of challenge and guidance for more able pupils.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. There has been some recent disruption in staffing and in senior leadership roles, some of which is still ongoing. The headteacher has managed this disruption very effectively. The quality of subject leadership is variable but generally underdeveloped. The school knows itself well. When it recognised that it was not performing as well as it should, specialist support and advice was sought from the local authority. This support has been effective in bringing about a number of significant improvements. New and more effective systems for tracking pupils' progress and intervening when underachievement is identified have been successfully introduced. Systems for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning now identify accurately where improvement is needed. The vast majority of parents are very supportive of the school. The governing body provides appropriate support and encouragement.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. It is led very well by the Reception teacher who has a clear picture of the strengths of the provision and of areas for development. The school has established good links with the nurseries children attend and has effective induction procedures which include the weekly toy library and opportunities for children and their parents/carers to spend time in school in the summer term. Staff place high priority on children's personal, social and emotional development and parents and carers are positive about the way that their children settle into school. Children enter Reception with levels of development that vary with each cohort but overall are below expected levels. Staff

are well trained and this enables them to support learning effectively. There is a good balance of activities between those directed by adults and those initiated by the children and opportunities to set children challenges in each area are used well. Children show good levels of concentration in the areas in which they choose to play. Basic skills are well taught and children learn how to cooperate with others and show consideration. They enjoy learning and make good progress. The limited space outdoors is used well. The children's books provide an excellent record of the progress made by each child with photographs and examples of work. By the end of Reception, the standards most children reach are broadly in line with national levels with a significant minority of children working above age-related expectations.

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

- Raise standards at both key stages, particularly in mathematics and for the more able pupils.
- Increase the proportion of good teaching.
- Provide greater challenge in lessons and improve marking and assessment to ensure more able pupils reach their full potential.
- Further develop the role of the subject leaders particularly in monitoring and developing the quality of teaching and learning.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged as 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**

Standards are broadly average and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Pupils join Year 1 with standards that are generally average. They make satisfactory progress as they move through the school and by the end of Year 6 are achieving broadly average standards. In the 2008 teacher assessments at the end of Year 2, standards were average overall, as they had been in previous years; they were higher in reading than in mathematics or writing. Given their starting points, pupils' achievement was satisfactory, but some higher ability pupils failed to attain the Level 3 grade in writing of which they were capable. Provisional test results at the end of Year 6 in 2008 indicate that standards overall were slightly below national expectations. Nevertheless, the achievement of these pupils was satisfactory given their lower starting points when they were in Year 1. However, the more able pupils in particular, did not reach the standards of which they were capable, especially in mathematics. Pupils are currently making satisfactory but accelerating progress. Year 6 pupils are on track to achieve the very challenging targets set for them in national tests due to take place in summer 2009. Standards in dance are outstanding and pupils' achievement in this area is excellent.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development is good, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Spiritual development is promoted very effectively by the school's caring and supportive ethos. Relationships throughout the school are excellent and support learning well. Residential visits in Years 5 and 6 help develop tolerance and understanding of others. Behaviour is good and exclusions rare. Pupils say there is hardly any bullying but they know who to turn to if they have any concerns. Initiatives such as the worry box, the buddy bench and playground buddies provide reassurance. Pupils have good opportunities to take on responsibility for

example, as house captains, school councillors, librarians or equipment monitors. Attitudes to learning are good. Pupils say they enjoy coming to school and like to get involved in school activities. They generally enjoy their lessons, only becoming bored and restless when activities lack sufficient challenge or they have to listen for too long. Attendance is good. Links with the local community are good, especially the parish community, but also through involvement in initiatives such as 'Best Garden' competitions and the local hospice. The school has a healthy school award and pupils talk knowledgeably about the need for healthy eating and taking regular exercise. They know how to keep safe, including Internet safety. They generally leave school with average basic skills which provide a satisfactory preparation for the next stage of learning.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. There is some good teaching in the school but not enough that motivates the pupils to want to learn. It is, however, improving. This is due not only to the advice and training being provided to the teaching staff by the local authority's monitoring and intervention team but also to the emerging monitoring by subject leaders. Where teaching is good, activities are well matched to pupils' prior attainment and it provides the right level of challenge for all the different ability groups in the class. In satisfactory lessons teachers spend too much time talking and provide insufficient opportunities for pupils to learn to work on their own. Good use is made of information and communication technology (ICT) to present lessons. There is provision for the setting of homework but some Year 6 pupils, particularly the higher attaining pupils, and a significant minority of parents, felt it was insufficient. Although teaching assistants are well deployed and work effectively with small groups or individuals, including pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, they are not sufficiently involved in assessing or monitoring the progress pupils make. Some marking is effective in showing pupils how to improve their work but it is not consistent in all classes and only occasionally relates to national curriculum levels.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The great majority of pupils enjoy school because of the good curriculum which promotes their personal development very well, as well as enabling them to reach high standards in areas such as dance, the arts and in sport. The wide range of after-school clubs in activities such as ICT, music, cookery and drama, have a high take up and add significantly to pupils' enjoyment of school. Visits by poets, artists and theatre companies enrich their experience. There is good provision for the essentials of literacy, numeracy and ICT. Very strong links with local high schools and colleges, as well as links with schools abroad, including Africa, support the curriculum well. Themed weeks, involving parents, add spice and variety. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and other vulnerable groups, receive good support. Support for the more able pupils is satisfactory.

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

#### **Grade: 2**

Pupils are very well cared for and receive satisfactory academic guidance. Pastoral care is a strong feature of the school. 'I have never known a more caring school' was one of several

positive parent comments on this aspect of the school's work. Relationships throughout the school are excellent. Links with outside agencies are good and provide very effective support to vulnerable pupils and pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The monitoring and promotion of good attendance is strong. Safeguarding procedures are in place and conform to recent legislation. The extent to which learners are well informed about their progress through helpful marking and assessment is satisfactory but variable. More able pupils in particular are not consistently set a high level of challenge or given specific guidance on how to reach the higher levels. Some good practice exists in setting curriculum targets but most pupils are not aware of their national curriculum target at the end of Key Stage 2.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The last two years have seen changes and instability in the senior leadership team but these issues have now largely been resolved. The headteacher provides strong and purposeful leadership. The school has an accurate picture of its strengths and weaknesses. Improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory. Systems for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school have been strengthened but are not yet effective enough in raising standards. A new tracking system, including regular pupil progress reviews, is making better use of data. Teachers are now aware of the levels of progress pupils are required to make to meet targets at the end of Key Stage 2, and which pupils are falling behind and need extra support. Consequently, the school is on track to achieve its statutory targets at the end of Year 6 in 2009. The school met its English target, but failed to meet its mathematics target at the end of 2007 and 2008. There is some good practice in subject leadership but it is inconsistent, particularly in its role of monitoring and improving classroom practice. The capacity for further improvement is satisfactory. Community cohesion is satisfactory. The school is very inclusive in its provision. Governors provide good support but monitoring systems for holding the school to account are underdeveloped. The daily breakfast club is popular and well managed.



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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### 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?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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/or disabilities make progress	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.

## 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	2
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>	3
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?	2

## 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	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 eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

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

9 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Morecambe, Lancashire, LA4 5PS

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 have found. Yours is a satisfactory school. It has some good features.

These are the main strengths of the school.

- Everyone in the school gets on really well together.
- You get off to a good start in the Reception class where you make good progress.
- You enjoy school and your attendance is good.
- Your behaviour and attitudes in lessons and around the school are good.
- The school looks after you really well.
- The after-school clubs, and the trips and visits the school arranges for you are extensive and support your learning very well.

These are the four things we think the school can work on to make improvements.

- Help you all to achieve higher standards in mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- Make sure those of you with high ability get the best possible results in national tests and assessments.
- Provide more of the good teaching and learning there is in the school already.
- Help the teachers who have responsibility for different subjects to become even more effective in supporting good achievement and high standards in their subjects.

You can help the school by continuing to work hard, particularly in mathematics.

Thank you once again for all your help and good luck for the future.

Yours faithfully

Joe Clark

Lead inspector