

St Marys Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119623
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	327090
Inspection dates	21–22 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Stephen Fisher

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	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	171
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
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms Therese Donnelly
Headteacher	Mr Mark Rogan
Date of previous school inspection	1 November 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	London Street Fleetwood Lancashire FY7 6EU
Telephone number	01253 878445
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

St Mary's is a smaller than average Catholic primary school serving an economically disadvantaged area in north Fleetwood. The percentage of pupils in receipt of free school meals is below average. The school has a lower than average percentage of minority ethnic pupils and a small percentage whose first language is not English. The percentage of pupils identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities is in line with the national average, with most of these being associated with speech, language and communication and emotional and behavioural difficulties. The number of pupils who join or leave the school other than at the normal times is broadly average but increasing. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) children are taught in a Reception class. The practice of the Catholic faith is fundamental to the life of the school and the aims, teachings and values of the Catholic faith underpin its ethos.

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's Catholic Primary School provides its pupils with a satisfactory education, though it does some things particularly well. For example, the youngest children make good progress, the behaviour of pupils is good throughout the school and pupils make a good contribution to the life of the school and the wider community. Parents who made their views known were very positive about the provision that the school makes and the outcomes their children achieve. One wrote 'I am very proud that my children attend St Mary's Primary School. The level of care and commitment given by all members of staff is second to none.'

Children make good progress in the EYFS and satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1 so that by the end of Year 2 their standards are broadly average. Standards by the end of Key Stage 2 have declined since the last inspection but the introduction of the local authority led 'Improving Schools Programme' in 2006/07 has resulted in a sharper focus on meeting the needs of pupils, tracking their progress carefully, and planning activities that properly meet their needs. The impact of the programme has brought about improvements in the progress of pupils in Key Stage 2, where progress is now satisfactory. Standards in English, mathematics and science are rising, as indicated by the provisional results from the 2008 national tests and inspection evidence, but are not yet high enough and remain below average.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory. Their attitudes to school and the way in which they approach their work are good. Most listen carefully to their teachers and engage well with their peers, though their work is not always presented well. Relationships between adults and pupils are a particularly strong feature of the school and pupils receive good pastoral support. Pupils' progress is tracked with increasing accuracy. Written feedback to them is clear about what they have achieved, although it does not always provide them with sufficient guidance about what they need to do to improve and reach their targets. Health and safety matters are dealt with appropriately and pupils are safe and secure at school.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers are effective in planning to meet the needs of their pupils. In most lessons they provide them with interesting and appropriately challenging activities and, as a result, pupils respond well. However, the needs of the more able pupils are not always catered for well enough. Provision for meeting the needs of pupils with learning difficulties is satisfactory. The curriculum places a strong emphasis upon the development of pupils' basic skills and the introduction of some themed work has provided more opportunities for pupils to develop their creative talents. This initiative is recent and yet to have any impact on the overall quality of curriculum provision, which is not sufficiently broad and balanced to engage pupils well.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school has judged its overall effectiveness to be good but its self-evaluation is too generous as monitoring procedures have not been effective enough in raising standards, particularly in English, mathematics and science.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Most children enter the EYFS with skills and knowledge that are below what is typical for their age. Almost all make good progress so that when they leave the Reception class, the majority are achieving at the expected level. Children are well looked after and all statutory welfare requirements are in place. There is a happy and purposeful atmosphere in which children enjoy

their learning. They settle well into routines, are developing good independence and behave well.

Children's early literacy skills are promoted effectively and they communicate and cooperate with each other well. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The learning environment is safe and attractive and the accommodation has been considerably improved since the last inspection. Though there have been some improvements to the outdoor provision since the last inspection, such as the introduction of bikes and large construction materials, it does not meet the requirements of the new EYFS curriculum to support all six areas of learning. For example, children do not have daily opportunities to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant via outdoor activities.

What the school should do to improve further

- Establish a sustained improvement in standards through effective monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance, particularly in English, mathematics and science.
- Ensure that the curriculum matches the full range of learners' aspirations and capabilities.
- Provide an outdoor provision for children in the EYFS which meets requirements for children in Reception in all six areas of learning.

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

Achievement is satisfactory. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 have varied over time but have consistently been at least in line with or above the national average in recent years. The majority of pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics.

Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 have been below average but the impact of the school's efforts to raise standards in English and mathematics are evident, largely through the school's involvement in the 'Improving Schools Programme'. Inspection evidence from monitoring school assessment records, examining pupils' books and observing pupils at work demonstrates that the programme is having a positive impact. Rates of progress in Key Stage 2 are now improving and standards are rising although they remain below average. The majority of pupils are making satisfactory progress, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those learning English as an additional language. However, the needs of the more able pupils are not always catered for well enough for them to be able to achieve as well as they can.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory and many aspects are good. The majority of pupils enjoy school, try hard with their work and behave well in lessons and around the school. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They have respect for those who have different faiths and cultures and a good understanding of what is right and wrong. They develop well spiritually as a result of opportunities to reflect and worship according to the principles of the Catholic faith. Pupils work well in pairs and groups, they take turns to speak and they listen well. They know the importance of eating healthily and staying safe. They

say they feel safe in school and that adults will always help them. One said, 'Everyone who works here is always there for you.' The school prefects and captains are proud of their roles and carry out their duties in mature and responsible ways. They are good role models for the younger pupils who show them great respect. Pupils are proud of the fact that their ideas and suggestions have led to the provision of play equipment. Some are especially proud to have represented the school at a recent summer school in Stratford-upon-Avon. Pupils readily take part in a range of community support and charity fund-raising activities and the school has been awarded a 'Service Above Self' certificate for its commitment to others. Pupils are prepared for the world of work in a satisfactory way. Their personal and social development is good, although their literacy and numeracy skills are below that expected when they leave the school. Attendance is well below average but the school is taking steps to bring about improvement.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Assessment information is used effectively to plan activities that are matched to the needs of individual pupils, though they are not always challenging enough for the more able pupils. Tasks are purposeful and engage pupils successfully. Teachers manage pupils well. They give a lot of praise and encouragement which produces good responses from the pupils. Teaching provides suitable opportunities for pupils to talk, solve problems and develop their ideas in pairs, though questioning rarely encourages lengthy answers from pupils. Teachers plan their time and that of their support staff well to engage and interact with pupils to support their learning, although opportunities are occasionally missed for some less able pupils to receive timely and focused support with their work. When this is lacking, it limits the progress which they are capable of making.

Much of the written feedback in pupils' books is clear about how well they have done but written guidance to help pupils improve is less consistently used. The school's focus on teachers having higher expectations of pupils and clearly stated expectations of what pupils should achieve in each year group has resulted in improvements in standards in Key Stage 2, though in some lessons there are limited opportunities for them to develop their ideas.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school has re-designed some aspects of the curriculum to provide more opportunities for pupils to develop their thinking and problem-solving skills. Nevertheless,, the curriculum is not broad enough to match the full range of pupils' capabilities and enable them to progress as well as they can. The science curriculum is planned to ensure that pupils have opportunities to develop their practical problem solving skills. Weekly themed work has been introduced to add creativity to the curriculum and enable pupils to apply and extend their skills in different areas of learning. This is a recent innovation and it is not yet firmly embedded. The school provides a range of visits and visitors to increase pupils' enjoyment and promote learning and there is a good range of well attended extra-curricular clubs. Pupils benefit from special curriculum days and creative weeks which strengthen their enjoyment of the curriculum. Pupils receive individual music tuition in clarinet, flute and saxophone, for example, and Key Stage 2 pupils attend swimming lessons at a nearby leisure centre. However, pupils do not have adequate opportunities to take physical exercise as part of the taught school day.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school places a high priority on the care and welfare of pupils. All required procedures to safeguard the pupils' health and well-being are in place. Staff know the pupils very well and demonstrate exemplary care for them and the school works effectively with other partners to look after pupils' well-being. The school has thorough assessment and tracking procedures to monitor attainment and progress. Pupils are assessed regularly and support is provided where underachievement is identified. There are some good examples of assessment practice in the school, for example, when pupils are given opportunities to explain their thinking and when they are given feedback on how well they are doing. Pupils have a secure knowledge of their targets for improvement but are not always clear about what they need to do to improve further.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The school has judged its leadership and management to be good. Inspectors judge it to be satisfactory, as the school's monitoring and evaluation procedures have not been rigorous or effective enough in improving performance. The school has recently established a secure focus on raising standards in English and mathematics as the core of its work. Better processes for planning, teaching and assessing progress in these subjects have been introduced in the last year and these are beginning to improve pupil achievement. The school is becoming increasingly effective in using information about pupils' standards to identify and tackle underachievement. There has been good investment in training and resources to improve teaching and learning in English and mathematics, though not for the broader curriculum. Although some subject leaders are new to, and still developing their roles and responsibilities, they clearly demonstrate a commitment to sustained improvement.

Governors support and challenge the school in a satisfactory way and demonstrate an increasing knowledge of the school's performance and where improvement is required. Most parents are very appreciative of the standard of education provided by the school, which has the trust and confidence of the local community. The school's overall contribution to community cohesion is good.

Resources are used efficiently, with spending securely aligned to school priorities and raising standards, except in terms of provision of resources for outdoor learning in the EYFS. The school provides satisfactory value for money and its capacity to improve is satisfactory.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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/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	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	4
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

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of 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?	3

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 eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
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**

23 October 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Fleetwood, FY7 6EU

On behalf of Mrs Richardson and myself, thank you very much for the kind welcome you gave us when we inspected your school recently.

We thoroughly enjoyed speaking to you and listening to you telling us about the school and your work. Your comments were very helpful to us. You were very good ambassadors for your school and it is clear that you are proud of it, work hard, behave well and enjoy life at St Mary's.

I would like to tell you what we found out during our visit. We think that your school is satisfactory. That means that it does some things well but there are some things that it needs to do better. Mr Rogan and the staff at the school have been working hard to improve your learning and the standards that you achieve. There are three things that we want the staff and governors to concentrate on in particular and you might consider how you can help them.

- First, we have asked your headteacher to raise standards particularly in English, mathematics and science through effective checks on the school's performance.
- Second, we have also asked that the school curriculum gives you the proper chance to develop all your talents, especially those of you who sometimes find learning easy and to enjoy a wider range of experiences.
- The third thing that we have asked your headteacher to do is improve the opportunities for children in the Reception class to enjoy exploring, playing and learning outside each day.

The school is doing a lot to improve your attendance at school. It will be really helpful to you and the school if you come to school whenever you possibly can and try not to take time off. Remember, if you are not in school you are missing out on your learning.

Once again, thank you for giving us a warm welcome. Good luck and best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Fisher

Lead inspector