

# St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Great Eccleston

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	119625
<b>Local Authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	327091
<b>Inspection date</b>	26 February 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Gordon Alston

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)	28
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>	Mrs Patricia Eastham
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr David Ramsay
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	21 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>	St Mary's Road Great Eccleston Preston Lancashire PR3 0ZJ

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection date</b>	26 February 2009
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- How well pupils achieve and the standards they reach in writing and mathematics.
- The success of the school's efforts to provide a stimulating curriculum which promotes pupils' interest and skills.
- Pupils' personal development and the involvement of pupils in self-evaluation and target setting.

Evidence was gathered from observations of lessons and pupils at lunch and play. Teachers' assessment records and pupils' work were scrutinised. Discussions were held with pupils, staff, governors and parents. Parents' responses to the inspection questionnaire were analysed. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

This is a small school where all of its pupils are from White British families. A number of pupils are not from the village itself but are transported to school from the surrounding areas. The proportion of pupils eligible to a free school meal is below average as is the percentage of pupils with a learning difficulty and/or disability. The Early Years Foundation Stage provision consists of the Reception class. The school has achieved Healthy Schools and Activemark Awards.

## 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. It has several outstanding features and provides good value for money. The very conscientious headteacher, strongly supported by a committed, caring staff, ensures the school successfully fulfils its mission 'to provide a stimulating learning environment for all, in a caring community where everyone feels respected and valued'. The school is very popular and has a very strong community spirit. The quality of care for pupils' social and emotional needs is outstanding. Parents have very positive views about the school reflected in comments such as, 'an excellent school, I am so pleased my children thrive in terms of personal and academic development because of the very high quality of pastoral care the school provides.'

Pupils comment that 'school is a great place to be it helps us to learn and how to get on together'. Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. They are very sociable and extremely happy in school, saying that their teachers make learning great fun and always encourage them to try their best. Behaviour is excellent. Relationships between pupils and adults are warm and very positive. Pupils' enjoyment of school shows in their willingness to talk about their learning and in the good quality of work in books and on display. Attendance is well above average. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Links to schools in other countries and to schools with pupils from different cultural backgrounds are being forged. Pupils have a good understanding of the importance of good nourishment and a healthy lifestyle.

Children's levels of attainment when they join the school vary each year due to variation in numbers and abilities. Their skills are mostly similar to what is typical for their age. Pupils achieve well during their time in school. Standards by the end of Year 2 are slightly above average and at the end of Year 6 are above average. Although Year 6 national test results have been variable because of significant differences in numbers, mathematics and science are slightly higher than English. This is because the standards reached by Year 6 pupils are not as high in writing. Pupils' achievement, in relation to their prior attainment, is good. However, writing across all year groups remains an area where further improvements can be made and this is acknowledged by the school. The school is already addressing both the way in which writing is taught, as well as how the curriculum is organised, so that pupils have greater opportunities to develop and extend their writing skills. Excellent support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities enables them to make brisk progress.

Teaching and learning are good because staff spend much time considering how best to interest and motivate their pupils to learn effectively. Teaching strengths include the emphasis on developing pupils' self-confidence, presentations that capture pupils' interests, and lessons that move along at a brisk pace. Support assistants make an excellent contribution to the success of lessons and are well briefed about their roles. Opportunities for pupils to evaluate their own work and to be involved in planning the next steps in their learning are developing well in writing. However, pupils are not always clear about how they will achieve their targets. Work is regularly marked but teachers do not always indicate how pupils can improve.

Pastoral care is outstanding. A particular strength is the way the school caters for new pupils starting school through a helpful programme of induction. Parents overwhelmingly compliment the school staff on the day-to-day attention they give to children's needs. Systems to ensure pupils' safety and protection from risks meet requirements.

The school provides a rich range of experiences for pupils, starting from the youngest age groups onwards. The strong focus on literacy and numeracy ensures good links between subjects that promote basic skills. The curriculum is enriched by a focus on environmental issues and making an impact in the drive to live in an ecologically sustainable way. Parents commented, 'the school does not see its small size as a barrier to the width of experiences it offers its pupils'. The curriculum makes a good contribution to the fitness of pupils not only through physical education but also through a very wide range of extra clubs and coaching opportunities. In addition, there is an excellent range of activities other than sports that contribute to pupils' personal development, for example, a gardening club and cheerleader groups, as well as residential experiences. Pupils enthuse about the many visits and visitors they have and how this makes their learning fun and exciting for example, a visiting dance group enriched their learning about Hinduism. Community cohesion is good. Pupils develop a real sense of belonging to the school community and also make a good contribution to the local community. Careful planning develops strong links with a number of community partners that help pupils to appreciate their wider social responsibilities. The school reaches out to extend pupils' wider experiences of other countries and lifestyles.

The school is well led and managed by the headteacher. Pupils appreciate the care he provides to nurture their individual talents. As one parent said, 'he cares one hundred per cent about each child and his concern for them is rewarded by his popularity'. The focus is clearly on continuing to raise standards, without losing sight of the importance of pupils' personal well-being and ensuring that pupils enjoy school without the pressure of constant testing. Rigorous systems of setting and monitoring of challenging pupil targets ensure pupils achieve as well they can. The headteacher and all staff work together well. Their skills of monitoring ensure that self-evaluation is accurate. Priorities are translated into a well-focused improvement plan that is being rigorously implemented, maintaining good standards across the school. Governors know the school well and provide helpful support and challenge.

## **Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

The Early Years Foundation Stage provides children with a happy, effective start to their school life in caring surroundings. Children's skills on entry to the school vary from year-to-year, but broadly match those found nationally. By the time children enter Year 1, most have reached expected levels across all of the areas of learning and some are exceeding this level. Provision is led and managed well. All the adults know the pupils really well and use assessment accurately to monitor the children's progress. As a result, children of all abilities make equally good progress. Welfare of the children is excellent. The teacher receives good support from other staff and together they safeguard the children's welfare very securely. The staff also have very good relationships with the children and with their parents. These are particularly effective in encouraging the children's confidence and raising their self-esteem. Personal development overall is excellent and children enjoy learning and play well together. Teaching and learning are good. This is because lessons are well planned and mostly make effective use of the spacious and comprehensive facilities and resources available. Generally, there is a suitable and improving amount of adult-led activity and those chosen by the children themselves. At times, though, adults intervene or direct children's learning during activities that the children have chosen themselves. As a result, the opportunities for children to initiate learning for themselves, especially in the outdoor area, are limited.

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

- Ensure pupils achieve as high as level as possible in writing.
- Improve the quality and consistency of marking and target-setting so that pupils have a clearer view of what they are doing and what they need to do to improve.

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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?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
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	2
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

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<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>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
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	2

## 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?	2
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**

27 February 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Great Ecclestone, Lancashire, PR30ZJ

I would like to thank you for making the inspectors feel so welcome when we inspected your school recently. We were really impressed with your excellent behaviour and the way you all get on so well. You made it very clear to us that you are proud of your school and enjoy learning because it is such a happy and safe school. We found that your school gives you a good standard of education that is getting better all the time. Some of the things we judged to be especially good are:

- your excellent attitudes to school, behaviour is exemplary and you show respect for each other and a real enthusiasm for learning
- the excellent way in which the adults in the school care for you and do all they can to help you make good progress
- the way in which your headteacher has worked so hard to improve the school
- the good teaching you receive helping you to learn and get on well together
- the way in which you contribute to the life of the school and your community.

I'm sure your teachers always say 'this is good but you could make it even better if you...' Well, this is what I am telling your school. To be even better, it needs to make sure that you all do as well as you can with your writing. It also needs to help you understand the targets that you are set and that they are used to help you to get to know how you can improve your work. When your work is marked the marking needs to tell you how you could do better. I know you like to have targets to try to achieve and find teachers' comments about your work helpful. You may have some ideas of your own on how your targets can best be shared and used with you and your parents.

Best wishes for the future.

Yours faithfully

Gordon Alston

Lead inspector