

# St Maria Goretti Catholic Primary School, Preston

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	119608
<b>Local Authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	331278
<b>Inspection dates</b>	7–8 July 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Andrew Stafford

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)	161
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>	Father Tim Sullivan
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Diane Gallagher
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 April 2008
<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>	Gamull Lane Ribbleton Preston Lancashire PR2 6SJ

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	7–8 July 2009
<b>Inspection number</b>	331278

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

## Description of the school

The school is smaller than average. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is higher than average and the school is situated in an area of socio-economic disadvantage. Almost all pupils are from White British families. The percentage of pupils with a statement of special educational need is low and the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average. Since the previous inspection, there has been a number of staffing changes and changes in the school's leadership. Early Years Foundation Stage provision comprises one Nursery class, mornings only, and one Reception class.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

St Maria Goretti Catholic Primary is now a satisfactory and improving school with some good features. It is improving because of increasingly effective leadership and management. Leaders are tackling weaknesses firmly and their action is improving the progress that pupils are making. The headteacher has established a strong team which is driving forward improvement across the whole school. As one parent commented, 'The school has moved on for the better; children are much happier and this shows through their improved behaviour'.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. By the end of Year 2, pupils reach broadly average standards from average starting points in Year 1. In the recent past, progress has been inconsistent as a result of staffing difficulties. Current progress is satisfactory due to the stability of staffing. In Years 3 to 6, achievement is satisfactory for most pupils, apart from the most able, and average standards are maintained. Throughout the school, writing is the weakest aspect of pupils' performance in English because of too few opportunities for pupils to write at length.

Overall, teaching is satisfactory and has been strengthened by new appointments. Pupils mostly enjoy lessons but when teachers' explanations are too long pupils lose interest and concentration. Teachers do not always vary their approaches or the way information is presented sufficiently well. Many lessons provide effectively for the different needs of pupils, giving them work which they find challenging. However, in some lessons this is not the case and, as a consequence, the most able do not make the progress they are capable of.

The way the school nurtures its pupils is a strength. The school has the ethos of a family community to which all its members belong. Staff are caring and the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. As a result, pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils grow considerably in confidence and maturity as they move through the school. They show great concern for each other's well-being. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and behave well. They have a good understanding of how to stay safe and healthy. Pastoral care for pupils is good and they feel very safe in school. Academic guidance is not as strong, but leaders have made improvements in helping pupils understand how well they are doing. For example, in English, comments in the form of carefully worded questions encourage pupils to reflect on how they can improve their work. However, there is some inconsistency across subjects in the use of marking to guide pupils to the next steps in their learning.

Leaders have worked effectively to develop many aspects of the curriculum which is now satisfactory. Pupils are inspired by trips and visits and think, rightly, that the after-school clubs are good. However, not enough good opportunities exist for them to practise and extend their writing skills in different subjects. The school has succeeded in strengthening links with parents. They feel that their part in their children's learning is increasingly valued and that they are supporting the school in the drive to raise standards.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

On entry to Nursery, children's skills and knowledge are below those typical of three-year-olds. Because their learning is carefully tailored to develop their basic skills, children make good

progress, especially in language and personal and social education. Although children reach expected levels in most areas of learning, their language skills lag behind other areas when they enter Year 1. The Nursery and Reception classes are happy, caring places where children enjoy their learning and achieve well. Parents say their children settle quickly because good induction arrangements, including accompanying children into class, help them to feel secure. Outstanding relationships create a very supportive environment in which children can thrive. Staff strike a good balance between leading the learning and providing opportunities for children to make choices. Children have time to explore things that interest them and to develop the confidence to be independent learners. The staff keep a close track of each child's progress and use this information well to plan what children need to learn next. The new Early Years Foundation Stage leader is successfully ensuring consistency of provision between classes. However, provision for outdoor learning for Reception children is very limited.

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

- Improve standards in writing by increasing opportunities for pupils to write at length and particularly across all subjects.
- Provide greater challenge for more able pupils in all lessons to ensure they achieve their full potential.
- Improve outdoor provision for Reception children.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged to be satisfactory but 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 and standards are broadly average. In the past, pupils have made inconsistent progress through the school. This is now being addressed successfully. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2 from average starting points when they leave Reception. In the 2009 Year 2 national tests, the results indicate that standards are average overall. Standards in reading and mathematics were broadly average but they were below average in writing. Overall, too few higher grades were achieved in all subjects.

Pupils' progress in Years 3 to 6 is also satisfactory and improving. In 2008, national test results improved but remained below average. There were marked differences between subjects. Mathematics and science were broadly average and English was below average. The unvalidated Year 6 test results in 2009 confirm the upward trend and overall standards are average. The levels achieved in English and mathematics improved. However, too few of the higher grades were achieved in English because writing is weaker than reading. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress similar to other pupils.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils are generally well behaved. They like school and are welcoming to visitors. Most enjoy learning, developing new skills and taking part in all that the school provides. The school council is making a positive contribution to the school's work, for example, in enhancing the equipment to play games outside at break and lunch times. Pupils say there is very little bullying or harassment and that, when incidents do occur, they are dealt with swiftly. Attendance is broadly

average. The strategies introduced recently to work with families are already improving it further. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They have a good sense of right and wrong, and relate well to each other and to adults. Pupils make a good contribution to the wider community, for instance, through their support of various charities. They have a good understanding of how to keep safe and healthy. Pupils develop self-esteem and confidence because their efforts and achievements are valued and rewarded, for example, through the use of special certificates and in assemblies that celebrate success. Pupils develop satisfactory skills to equip them for the next stage of their education.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching is satisfactory. Lesson planning is thorough and teachers often use probing questions well to extend pupils' thinking and encourage concentration. Teachers' explanations are usually clear but can sometimes go on too long, not taking sufficient account of how pupils learn in different ways. Although this leads to some inattention, pupils quickly re-focus and are productive when independent work is given. In most lessons, praise is regularly used well to promote pupils' self-esteem. All lessons have clear objectives that pupils understand.

Teachers' expectations are increasingly high, and reflected in the demands they make of pupils in lessons. As a result, achievement is improving. On occasions, the work set for the most able pupils is not challenging enough. Teachers' assessment is effective in encouraging pupils to reflect on what they know and can do. However, there is some inconsistency across subjects in the use of marking so that pupils do not always know how they can improve their work.

Teachers are supported well by teaching assistants who have a good understanding of pupils' individual needs. They support pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities so that they are able to make similar progress to their peers. In most lessons, good resources are used to support learning and motivate pupils. Usually, pupils answer questions confidently, cooperate well and participate actively in lessons. Pupils only become restless when learning is not well matched to their needs.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum is satisfactory, but it has a good impact on pupils' personal skills. Lessons are carefully planned to enable pupils to consider respect and acceptance of people's differences. Provision for the main subjects, especially English, mathematics and information and communication technology, is satisfactory. However, it does not meet the needs of more able pupils, and pupils have too few opportunities to write at length across all subjects. The school is developing a more relevant, exciting curriculum by linking subjects together and providing pupils with opportunities to relate school learning to real life situations. Pupils say they enjoy recently introduced theme days such as 'Eco' and 'Global Awareness' days. The wide range of after-school clubs enriches curricular provision and enhances pupils' sporting, artistic and musical talents effectively. The support given by external agencies, visitors and links with the local community make a particularly good contribution to pupils' welfare.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory with strengths in the support for pupils' personal development. Parents are accurate in their view that the school is 'very caring and supportive'. Pupils say they feel safe and secure. Staff work closely with the parents of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Effective use is made of outside agencies to support families in relation to education, health and community policing. The links to a local Children's Centre, which is close to school, are bringing positive outcomes in helping develop parenting skills. Procedures for maintaining pupils' health and safety and child protection meet requirements.

Academic guidance is satisfactory. New procedures are in place for checking on the progress pupils are making in reading, writing and mathematics. These are raising teachers' and pupils' expectations and helping to identify any underachievement. Strategies are also in place to help pupils who are experiencing difficulties in their work in class. As a result, pupils are beginning to receive better guidance and support for their academic development.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

The headteacher provides visionary and inspirational leadership. She has a very clear idea of how to improve standards and the quality of the school's provision, and of what to do to achieve this. With the proactive deputy headteacher and confident senior leadership team, she has put in place a good number of new strategies for improvement and to raise standards. These are beginning to have a positive effect on several aspects of school life, including pupils' behaviour and attitudes, as well as standards. It is too soon, however, for their impact to be fully realised. Current provision has been thoroughly evaluated by staff at all levels. As a result, the school is very clear about its development needs. For example, the detailed tracking of pupils' academic progress was recognised as an area which would support the raising of standards and a system for this has been successfully introduced. Middle leaders collect class teachers' assessment data to monitor progress in their subjects. They have an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses in their areas of responsibility. This has led to planned actions, especially in the challenge for the most able pupils, the full extent of which has yet to be fully realised.

The members of the governing body are keen, committed and supportive, but their role in formally monitoring the quality of the school's provision is underdeveloped. The school is committed to promoting community cohesion which is satisfactory. Included in the curriculum is a range of activities that raises pupils' awareness of different faiths, cultures and backgrounds, both locally and across the rest of the world. The school is developing systems that monitor changes in the school and the impact of these on pupils' progress. Based on the measurable improvements already achieved, the school's capacity to make further improvements is good.



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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	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?	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	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>	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

<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	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
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 July 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Maria Goretti Catholic Primary School, Preston, Lancashire, PR2 6SJ

Thank you for the very warm welcome to your school. We enjoyed talking to you in lessons and during your playtimes. We were very impressed with how friendly and confident you were. You gave us a lot of valuable information and this was a great help to us. We think that your school looks after you very well and is now giving you a satisfactory education. Your personal development is good and teaching is satisfactory. You are making satisfactory progress, which is improving because school leaders are working hard to make the school better.

What we liked most about your school:

- you are making good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- the school makes sure you are safe and secure
- you are kind and thoughtful towards each other
- you have positive attitudes and you behave well
- the after-school clubs and visits to different places help you to learn and develop your skills well
- you have a good understanding about how to stay healthy.

We have suggested some ways in which the school can improve further and have asked your headteacher and others to:

- improve your writing by getting you to write longer pieces in more subjects
- make sure that the most able get work that is more difficult and do better
- provide outside play equipment for the Reception class.

We feel confident that your school will continue to improve.

Yours faithfully

Andrew Stafford and Gordon Alston

Additional inspectors