

# St Mary's Catholic Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	126042
<b>Local Authority</b>	West Sussex
<b>Inspection number</b>	335186
<b>Inspection dates</b>	11–12 November 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Christine Jones HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills (HMCI) the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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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 of pupils on the school roll</b>	255
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr M Hodson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs C Lewis
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7 September 2009
<b>School address</b>	Cobden Road Worthing West Sussex BN11 4BD
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<b>Fax number</b>	01903 215034
<b>Email address</b>	office@st-marysrc.w-sussex.sch.uk

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## Introduction

When St Mary's Catholic Primary School was inspected in September 2008, it was judged to require special measures. This inspection was carried out at no notice by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector. The inspectors visited 14 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils and parents. They observed the school's work and looked at documentation, including the school's plans and self-analysis, minutes of governors' meetings, tracking information on pupils' performance, as well as samples of pupils' work.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the effective use of information on pupil performance to improve progress
- the impact of monitoring and evaluation strategies on reviewing the school's work
- the effectiveness of teachers' planning to ensure activities meet the needs of all learners and the quality of marking
- curriculum provision and subject coverage.

## Information about the school

St Mary's Catholic Primary School is slightly larger than average. The majority of pupils are white British with one in three coming from a range of other ethnic groups. Almost a quarter of pupils are learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. Their needs mostly relate to language and communication, with some behavioural and emotional difficulties.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**3**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**3**

### Main findings

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 special measures.

The school has improved since its last inspection. As one parent said, 'I am really pleased with the many positive changes.' Successful leadership has improved teaching, raised achievement and enhanced pupils' personal development. The school is working well because leaders now closely and accurately monitor the school's work and have clear strategies to tackle areas for development. Since the leaders have raised expectations among staff and pupils, attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 and in other years is now average and continuing to improve. Overall, achievement is rising and is now satisfactory.

Pupils' good personal qualities and friendliness contribute much to making the school a pleasant and purposeful place. They work hard, listen attentively and behave well. As one girl said, 'I really like school now; I wish I could be here all the time.' Pupils enjoy school and their attendance, reflecting this, is satisfactory. They know the importance of working hard and appreciate the improvements that have taken place in the past year. They are proud of their new school council and are keen to be elected as class representatives.

Teaching is satisfactory overall. The best lessons include thorough planning and well-focused support for less confident learners, challenging marking and good pace. Some lessons are too slow and teachers do not always pitch work at sufficiently demanding levels, and so more able pupils do not always achieve as well as they should. Where teachers talk too much in lessons, pupils are not given enough opportunities to be actively involved in their learning. Similarly, in the Early Years Foundation Stage adult-led sessions do not always keep the children interested. Assessment and marking of pupils' work have improved and all teachers are now using the 'two stars and a wish' strategy, which acknowledges success and gives advice on how to improve. The success of this approach is variable, as the 'wish' is sometimes too vague and does not relate to specific areas for improvement. The school has developed good systems for monitoring and tracking pupil performance to identify underachievement quickly and provide teachers with appropriate information on how to help their pupils. This is not as strong in the Early Years Foundation Stage and the school is aware this needs to improve.

A new curriculum has been implemented and now gives appropriate emphasis to all National Curriculum subjects through a variety of different themes. While curriculum planning covers the content teachers are expected to teach, there is not enough emphasis on strategies to support pupils' progress in learning. The pupils are very

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enthusiastic about the good range of activities provided for them outside of their lessons. They like the sporting activities and understand how important it is to keep active and healthy. Pupils are also very appreciative of activities that allow them to help and care for others, such as 'playground buddies' and the 'Enable me' workshops which widen their awareness of disability. This reflects the importance the school places on providing for the needs of pupils who are more vulnerable or who find behaving well more difficult.

This is a school which has moved forward and is giving every indication that this will continue. Essential systems are in place to support improvement and the headteacher and staff are focused resolutely on the learning and pastoral needs of the pupils.

### **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Improve teaching and learning by:
  - sharpening the pace of lessons to keep pupils engaged with their learning
  - making sure that lessons are challenging, especially for more able pupils
  - planning for more opportunities in lessons to encourage independent, active learning.
- Review curriculum planning regularly to increase the emphasis on how pupils learn rather than focusing on delivering content.
- Improve children's learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
  - making sure all activities are challenging and engaging
  - raising expectations for children's learning, particularly in adult-led sessions
  - ensuring monitoring and evaluation of the outcomes for children is rigorous and consistently well led.

### **Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**

**3**

Pupils are now making satisfactory progress in their learning. In 2009 standards in the Year 6 tests improved significantly from previous well below average levels. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 in reading and writing improved in 2009 and are closer to the national average, but mathematics remains below average. Different groups of pupils, including those from minority ethnic backgrounds and those with special educational needs and/or who are disabled, make equal progress as a result of the school's strongly inclusive ethos. Although more able pupils also make satisfactory progress, there is scope to stretch and challenge them in lessons. Pupils at an early stage of speaking English receive good support both from their teachers, and especially from other pupils speaking the same home language who are more fluent in English. Pupils develop satisfactory basic skills which they will need in order to succeed in the next stage of their learning.

Pupils are certain they are very safe in the school and know they can talk to an adult if they need to. They have a good understanding of how to be healthy and say they really

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do prefer carrot sticks to chips! All pupils, including the younger ones, like to take care of each other and share their own particular skills, such as speaking another language. This creates a harmonious community where pupils know they are valued and are encouraged to contribute to the school. Pupils are comfortable and at ease with the strong spiritual life of the school. They value the diverse languages and cultures found in the school and have strong views about fairness and equality.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective is the provision?

Teachers organise their classrooms well and create a welcoming learning environment. Their subject knowledge is generally secure. While teachers often use directed questions and 'talk partners' to help pupils develop their thinking skills, too often they do too much of the talking instead of drawing information and understanding from their pupils. Some pupils, not only the more able, commented that their work is occasionally still too easy. Assessment strategies have improved and now give pupils better guidance on how to improve their work, although this is inconsistent. Marking is regular and rewards pupils' efforts but does not always show pupils how they can improve or consistently involve

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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them in the process of 'getting better'. Teaching assistants provide valuable support to a wide range of pupils through their effective work with individuals and different groups. They are skilled in helping pupils with specific needs, as well as in providing more general support.

The school is working hard to develop a curriculum which interests and engages the pupils. The two-year cycle is carefully organised to meet the needs of the learners and eliminate repetition. A series of planned themes include strong links between subjects and include basic skills, such as information and communications technology (ICT). This planning does not yet take sufficient account of the need to support learning and there are still differences between the intended curriculum and that actually delivered in lessons.

The school is caring, supportive and effective in meeting pupils' needs and promoting their personal development. Vulnerable pupils receive good individual care and the school actively seeks advice and input from outside agencies to support these pupils and their families.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

There is a good working partnership between the school and its governing body. Governors are well informed and challenge the school about progress and standards. The headteacher has played a decisive part in lifting expectations among staff, pupils and parents. This has led to recent improvements in outcomes and the quality of teaching which have, within a short time, made a difference to learners' confidence and competence. There are effective systems for checking on the impact of teaching and for setting well-focused and challenging targets. The school's evaluation accurately identifies areas for development and work is underway to improve areas such as the Early Years Foundation Stage and to strengthen teaching and learning.

At the time of the inspection all safeguarding requirements were met. All required procedures are in place and are updated regularly, although some have not yet been evaluated as thoroughly as they should be. The school makes a good contribution to community cohesion. Through its own strong faith basis, the school ensures that pupils show pride in their school and the way they work and play together, and that they have a good understanding of the world's main religions. Links with the local neighbourhood are developing well, although the school recognises the need for further improvement.

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Curriculum planning capitalises on pupils' differing cultural backgrounds through 'Country of the Month' activities. This also ensures pupils new to the school from other countries are welcomed into the school community. The support given to these pupils is an example of the school's drive to promote equality. Parents are pleased about recent improvements and appreciate improved communication, which has helped them to become more involved in their children's learning.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

The children enjoy school and are developing confidence and independence. From average starting points on entry to the school, most meet the expected levels for their age and make satisfactory progress in communication, language and literacy. They learn to express their ideas and most show clear understanding of numbers. Progress in personal development is often good, although some children find it difficult to settle into the daily routines. Activities, such as visits from a local vet with Nelly the dog, help to widen children's knowledge and understanding of the world. Children participate enthusiastically in creative and imaginative play. Their physical development is satisfactory, through planned opportunities for them to learn to balance and climb, use small equipment and wheeled vehicles. Satisfactory teaching and teamwork underpin provision. Teachers make appropriate use of recently improved resources to provide some interesting activities that encourage children to make choices and investigate. Children have opportunities to learn through a mix of activities led by adults and those they choose for themselves, although adults do not always extend and challenge the children's thinking. Assessment is improving and a broad picture of each child's



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achievements is being built up. The satisfactory leadership is clear about the strengths and areas that are in need of improvement. In particular, there is recognition that monitoring procedures are not always sharp enough to ensure that teaching improves and that all children achieve as well as they should. Parents are very involved in their children's education and are pleased with the support given to their children. The home'school diary system, linked to the reading programme, is working well and parents appreciate the regular consultations that they have with the teachers.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

### **Views of parents and carers**

Parents who were interviewed were largely positive about the school. They were happy that their children were well looked after and enjoy coming to school. Communications with the school were regarded as good and parents said they were well informed about their children's progress. They were pleased with the quality of education and care in the school.

## **Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire**

Parental questionnaires are not normally distributed for inspections conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005, unless inspectors have specific reasons to request that the school does so.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



13 November 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Worthing BN11 4BD

Thank you for making us feel so welcome when we came to your school. We enjoyed our visit and were very pleased to see how much the school has improved. It now provides you with a satisfactory quality of education. You have played an important part in helping the school to improve. Well done!

There are several good things about your school.

- Your behaviour is good and you get on well together.
- You make a really good contribution to the school community.
- The staff take good care of you and work hard to help, especially if you have any problems.
- You know how to keep yourselves safe and healthy.
- Your headteacher has made a real difference in improving the school.

There are still things to improve and you can help by continuing to do your best and by working hard. We have asked the teachers to improve your learning by making sure that lessons for all of you are lively, interesting and challenge you to do your best. We have also asked teachers to make sure you have more opportunities to be involved in your lessons and to think about how well lessons help you to learn. We would like teachers looking after the youngest pupils to make sure sessions led by adults are also challenging and interesting and that they keep a close watch on how well you are doing. Everyone at the school wants you to do well and we noticed how proud you are of St Mary's. We hope that you continue to be happy and successful there.

Yours sincerely

Christine Jones

Her Majesty's Inspector

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