

# St Mary's RC Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	106252
<b>Local Authority</b>	Tameside
<b>Inspection number</b>	336645
<b>Inspection dates</b>	24–25 March 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Andree Keddle

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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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 of pupils on the school roll</b>	255
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Rev V Cavey
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ms Deidre Reeves
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	21 November 2006
<b>School address</b>	Kynder Street Denton Manchester M34 2AR
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 19 lessons, observed 9 teachers and held meetings with the School Improvement Officer, governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at documentation including safeguarding documents, school policies, the school development plan, the raising achievement plan, assessment data, pupils' work, teachers' planning and 78 parental questionnaires.

- the achievement of all pupils, particularly in writing and mathematics, to determine whether teaching and the curriculum are meeting their learning needs
- the progress made by different groups such as boys, girls, more able pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities
- the rigour and effectiveness of leadership in driving improvement, leading teaching and learning, and raising standards
- the capacity of the governing body to deal with issues and the rigour with which it supports the school and holds leadership to account.

## Information about the school

This is a larger than average primary school. Most pupils are of White British heritage with very few pupils whose first language is not English. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average, as is the proportion of pupils eligible for a free school meal. Since the last inspection, the school has experienced several staff changes. Recently, a permanent appointment to the post of deputy headteacher has been made to begin in September 2010. The school has the National Healthy School Standard and has been awarded the Activemark for a fourth consecutive year.

**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

This is a satisfactory and improving school. There is a legacy of some underachievement and a decline in standards in English, mathematics and science since the last inspection. The school's current assessment data show improved progress which indicates that this trend has been reversed and that pupils are now attaining average standards. Overall, pupils make sound progress as a result of satisfactory teaching. Approximately one third of teaching observed during the inspection was good. There are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and in the progress that pupils make as a result. For example, more able pupils make less progress than their peers. Assessment systems are in place so that the school is able to check on the progress that pupils are making, but teachers' expectations of the amount of progress pupils should make are not always high enough. Pupils have targets related to how to improve their work, but do not always fully understand what these mean. The curriculum is focused mainly on English and mathematics and although other subjects are taught, less time is spent on these and, as a result, pupils' progress is not as strong.

The school cares for its pupils well and effective procedures are in place to support pupils' development and well-being and to ensure their excellent attendance. Close links exist with pre-school settings and the local secondary school, and pupils are well supported through periods when they transfer into and out of this school. Relationships are positive between teachers and pupils and between pupils and they say that they feel happy and safe. Parents and carers agree that their children enjoy school. Pupils' behaviour is good in lessons and around the school and they cooperate well together.

The senior leadership team is focused on improving the school. Self-evaluation identifies the correct areas for improvement, but is over generous with regard to the school's performance. There have been a number of recent improvements, such as the creation and implementation of a raising attainment plan and better teaching of writing as a result of staff training. The school has responded well to support and challenge from the local authority. Reports from the School Improvement Partner have focused attention on the key areas for improvement. The governing body does not fully use data about pupils' learning to challenge the school's leadership. However, it has improved the rigour of its monitoring and there is some recent evidence of its increasing impact on the direction and work of the school. The school's capacity for further improvement is satisfactory.

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

- Raise standards in English, mathematics and science by ensuring that:

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- teaching is consistently good throughout the school
- pupils are fully aware of their targets and understand what these mean
- lessons are challenging and meet the needs of all groups of learners, particularly the more-able pupils
- lessons are well paced and teachers have high expectations of the amount of work that pupils should complete.
- Increase the rate of pupils' progress by ensuring that:
  - better use is made of data and information on pupils' progress to set challenging targets and high expectations for individuals or groups
  - the governing body holds the school to account through challenging questions and by having a clear understanding of data and of key improvement issues
  - monitoring and evaluating performance is regular and focuses on pupils' learning
  - self-evaluation is accurate, rigorous and impacts on improving pupils' progress.
- Ensure that all subjects of the curriculum are given sufficient teaching time so that the learning needs of pupils are fully met.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****3**

Pupils enjoy school and achieve satisfactorily. Rates of progress vary. Progress accelerates when pupils experience good teaching. For example, pupils in upper Key Stage 2 demonstrated good computer skills in a well-taught lesson which gave them the opportunity to apply their knowledge about creating hyperlinks to a multi-media presentation. Where good teaching is exemplified by challenging and interesting tasks, pupils are motivated and enjoy learning. For example, pupils showed great enthusiasm in a Year 6 lesson in which they had to produce arguments for and against the use of genetically modified foods. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress in their learning as the result of effective support from teachers and teaching assistants. More able pupils do not make as much progress as their peers, but this is improving.

Pupils say that behaviour is good and inspectors agree. Pupils are aware of anti-bullying initiatives and say bullying is very rare. They feel safe in school and know that any concerns will be resolved by adults. Pupils have a good understanding of what is needed to live a healthy life and demonstrate this through making healthy choices, such as choosing to eat fruit and other healthy snacks at break and lunch-time. Pupils' contribution to the school and wider community is satisfactory; for example, they act as playground leaders, monitors and house captains and take part in decision-making as members of the school council. Also, pupils take part in fundraising for both national and local charities, such as the local hospice. Pupils' current basic skills are broadly average.

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This means that the extent to which they develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being is satisfactory.

*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>3</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>	1
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>3</b>

### How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, with some good teaching observed during the inspection. Where teaching is good, lessons have a brisk pace, are suitably challenging for pupils' different abilities and allow pupils to apply their knowledge and skills. In a mathematics lesson in upper Key Stage 2, the teacher ensured that pupils had many opportunities to explain the different methods they were using to find a variety of percentages. Effective questioning ensured that all the pupils participated well in the lesson, even those who were less confident about explaining the methods used. Work in books is well marked and pupils are given clear direction on how to improve and take the next steps in learning.

Where teaching is no better than satisfactory, the pace of learning is slower and activities are not well matched to pupils' learning needs. Pupils are not as attentive as they are in the good lessons, as a result of a slower pace and less challenge. Teachers

<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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talk for too long and pupils do not have enough time to apply their skills and knowledge. There is an over-reliance by teachers on the use of worksheets and marking in books gives pupils little guidance as to what to do to improve their work. There is insufficient challenge in the learning activities for the more able pupils.

The school has recently revised the curriculum to make links between different subjects. However, these links are underdeveloped and topic work lacks consistency. Too much emphasis is placed on English and mathematics and there is too little work completed in other subjects. In some classes, teachers do make stronger links between subjects, as was seen in an information and communication technology (ICT) lesson in Year 6. Pupils had designed an environmentally friendly gadget in design and technology and were creating a multi-media presentation about their product in the ICT lesson.

The effectiveness of the care, guidance and support for pupils is good. Pupils are well cared for and highly effective systems are in place to ensure that pupils behave well. Relationships are good between staff and pupils. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive well-targeted support that helps them to participate fully in school life. The school works closely with relevant external agencies to ensure that pupils' needs are met effectively. For example, there are well-established links with the local high school which facilitate a smooth transfer at age 11.

*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?**

Although the school's leadership team is committed to school improvement, self-evaluation is not rigorous or critical enough. Targeted intervention from the local authority is improving the school's provision and there are strategies in place which are raising standards and improving pupils' progress. Recent improvements to monitoring procedures ensure that staff at all levels are held accountable for the progress that pupils make. Current targets set for pupils' attainment and progress are challenging, but their impact is hindered because pupils do not always fully understand what these targets mean. Outcomes for pupils are satisfactory; therefore, the school's deployment of resources to achieve value for money is satisfactory.

The school works well with other agencies and professionals, such as speech therapists, educational psychologist, education welfare officer and the Traveller Support Service. Procedures to safeguard children are good, fully meet requirements and staff training is up-to-date. The school makes a satisfactory contribution to community cohesion. The

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school is a cohesive community and pupils respect each other's differences, feel safe and behave well. Work to promote community cohesion beyond the school is less well developed. The school's work in promoting equal opportunity and tackling discrimination is satisfactory and the school monitors the outcomes for different groups of pupils.

*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>3</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>2</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>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter the Reception class with skills and knowledge that overall are broadly typical for their age. However, their speaking and listening skills are underdeveloped. Many structured activities take place to develop the children's speaking and listening skills and in the Nursery they are able to identify the features of a 'good listener'. There is suitable balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities. By the start of Year 1, most children demonstrate the skills expected of them.

Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress as a result of well-targeted support from staff. Relationships between staff and children and their parents and carers are good. Praise is used well to encourage children in their learning and behaviour and as a result, children behave appropriately and are safe. All welfare requirements are met and the environment is safe and secure. Good links exist with pre-school settings, so children are helped to make a smooth transition into the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children are settled and happy. Curricular planning is satisfactory, but opportunities are missed to focus on activities to promote and inspire imaginative play, particularly in the outdoor area. This means that children move quickly from one activity to another without sustained time on one task that engages their interest.



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The leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are satisfactory and the school has benefited from local authority support. Appropriate assessment of children's learning takes place and recent data confirm that the children are making satisfactory progress.

*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 and carers agree that their children enjoy school and the vast majority say that the school helps their children to have a healthy lifestyle. Inspectors agree with these views. A small minority of parents say that the school does not deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors judge that the school has effective systems for dealing with misbehaviour and pupils' behaviour is judged to be good. A few parents are concerned that their child is not making enough progress at school, that the school does not help them enough to support their child's learning and that the school does not take full account of their suggestions and concerns. No evidence was found to confirm these concerns during the inspection.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Mary's RC Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 86 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 255 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	42	49	44	51	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	51	59	28	33	4	5	2	2
The school informs me about my child's progress	34	40	43	50	7	8	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	36	42	39	45	7	8	2	2
The teaching is good at this school	42	49	37	43	4	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	30	35	47	55	8	9	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	40	47	42	49	1	1	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	31	36	44	51	7	8	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	34	40	38	44	10	12	2	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	26	30	48	56	11	13	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	26	30	45	52	10	12	2	2
The school is led and managed effectively	33	38	49	57	0	0	3	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	37	43	42	49	2	2	2	2

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## 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.**



Dear Pupils

Thank you very much for the warm welcome you gave the inspectors when we inspected your school. Thank you for talking to us freely and giving your opinions in the questionnaires; you are clearly proud of your school. We were impressed with your good behaviour and your excellent attendance. Your school cares for you well and makes sure that you have a good understanding of how to keep yourselves safe and healthy.

Overall, we judged that yours is a satisfactory school. To help your school become even better, we have said that senior leaders should:

- help you to do better in English, mathematics and science
- make sure that you fully understand your targets and to know the next steps in your learning
- ensure that more time is spent on teaching you the full range of subjects.

You can help by continuing to try your best and by working hard so that you achieve your targets.

Yours sincerely

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