

St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Batley

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107732
Local Authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	336942
Inspection dates	16–17 September 2009
Reporting inspector	Roger Gill

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	323
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs W West
Headteacher	Miss Nicola Grant
Date of previous school inspection	5 March 2007
School address	Upton Street Batley West Yorkshire WF17 8PH
Telephone number	01924 326740
Fax number	01924 326741
Email address	head.stmarysjin@kirklees-schools.org.uk

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	16–17 September 2009
Inspection number	336942

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2009

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 13 lessons, and held meetings with staff, governors and pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at a range of evidence including the school improvement plans, the tracking system used to monitor pupils' progress, the work pupils were doing in their books and the questionnaires completed by parents and carers, pupils and staff.

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

- Whether attainment at the end of Year 6 is still average.
- The impact of recent developments in assessment and target-setting on the quality of teaching and pupils' learning and progress.
- The effect of current monitoring and evaluation in improving pupils' achievement.
- The full extent of the school's provision for community cohesion.

Information about the school

St Mary's is a larger than average school which admits pupils from a wide area owing to its Catholic denomination. They come from a broadly typical range of socio-economic backgrounds. A below average proportion of pupils are eligible for free school meals. There are low numbers of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and very few speak English as an additional language. There are slightly more boys than girls. An above average proportion of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities, although those with a statement of special educational need are relatively few in number. Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage comprises a unit for Nursery and Reception-aged children. Since the last inspection, the school has experienced a sizeable change in staffing: there is a new acting headteacher, acting deputy headteacher and several new staff. These changes have been associated with resignations and long-term illness. The school has achieved the Activemark award, the FA Charter Standard Mark for football and the FMSIS award for financial management.

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

St Mary's is a satisfactory school which is improving well after a series of difficulties that had the effect of slowing pupils' progress in the key subjects of English and mathematics. Recent advances in keeping track of how well pupils are doing, and setting targets for groups of pupils to reach, are beginning to be effective in raising attainment and speeding up the rate of pupils' learning.

The trend is one of average attainment and satisfactory progress by the end of Year 6. However, in 2009, standards in Year 6 were above average largely owing to improvements in English. Attainment in mathematics rallied from a previous dip but in comparison with English and science, pupils could have done better. Mathematics is not improving at the same rate because progress is seldom better than satisfactory throughout the school. Recent improvements in English stem from the close attention paid to the performance of different groups. As a result, some pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and some higher attainers forged ahead in their reading and writing, while progressing no more than satisfactorily in mathematics.

Current attainment in Year 6 is average but pupils are progressing well because learning is focused and lively. Pupils are taking more responsibility for how well they are doing. Teaching is becoming more proficient at helping pupils to understand what to do to reach high levels. Elsewhere in the school, pupils are not always clear about what they need to do to improve their work in English and mathematics. The new systems of marking and other methods of setting targets are not yet used well enough in all classes.

The positive climate in school, the supportive relationships and the well-devised procedures for keeping pupils safe are having a good effect on pupils' personal qualities. The emphasis on attending regularly, keeping fit and healthy, considerate behaviour, contributing to school life and in the local community is working well. Pupils are developing into well-rounded individuals with a good level of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They celebrate their own faith and also enjoy learning about people from other communities with other cultures and beliefs.

The school's overall effectiveness is not yet entirely good because pupils' learning and progress are satisfactory in the main. In Years 1 and 2, learning is steady rather than good. In Years 3 and 4, the pace of progress is patchy with quicker progress in some classes existing alongside predominantly satisfactory learning in others. Nevertheless, the school asserts that the weaker teaching, which lacked urgency in raising attainment at the last inspection, has been eliminated and inspectors agree. There is a sense of unity among staff brought about by knowledgeable leadership from the acting

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

headteacher and deputy headteacher, which is beginning to have the desired effect. Staff are very supportive of recent advances; some declare that there is a 'real vibe about the place', which sums up the current atmosphere of rejuvenation. Furthermore, pupils and parents hold very positive views about the school's current achievements. The school's capacity to continue these improvements is satisfactory. Although the upswing has begun, improvements are not yet embedded fully because there has been too little time for the leadership, at senior and middle levels, to have a sustained effect. The acting headteacher and governors know the school's strengths and weaknesses, which are represented in well-devised action plans for development. Information from the assessment of pupils' learning, for example, is beginning to be used purposefully to guide teaching and quicken progress. However, the monitoring and evaluation conducted by leadership, and the subsequent guidance for teaching, are not yet thorough or precise enough to have a wholly good effect for all groups of pupils in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in mathematics to match advances in English by making pupils' progress at least good in each class throughout the school.
- Use the information from assessments of pupils' learning more effectively to enable teaching to set more demanding targets for all groups of pupils in English and mathematics.
- Ensure that all pupils are fully aware about how to improve their work by applying the methods already in place with more consistency.
- 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**

The quality of learning present in lessons throughout the school ensures that pupils make sound progress to reach broadly average attainment by the end of Year 6. Pupils' achievement is related closely to the degree of enjoyment they experience in learning. Moreover, good personal development helps them to make the most of their experiences. Qualities such as thoughtful reflection, considerate behaviour and an eagerness to participate underpin their learning and progress, particularly in lessons that value and plan for a variety of active contributions.

Pupils are keener to succeed when tasks go beyond just listening and carrying out pencil and paper exercises. For example, in a Year 4/5 lesson linking literacy to religious understanding, pupils explored, through discussion, the feelings of a Jewish nineteenth century immigrant in New York using drama to demonstrate their conclusions. Mathematics is taught to groups of similar ability in Year 6. As a result, pupils appreciate the well-pitched challenging questions aimed appropriately at their level of understanding. In such lessons, boys, who can sometimes be in the majority, thrive on

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

the demanding questions and sense of competition generated. By contrast, on some other occasions, pupils willingly undertake more mundane tasks and their progress is limited. Listening to the teacher sometimes enthalls them but when the pace of learning slackens they can become restless.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities progress satisfactorily owing to the support they receive. They do better in reading and writing because the school has made this a priority. Higher attaining pupils respond well when challenges are demanding but jog along at the same rate as others when their tasks are not appreciably different from those set for the class.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	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
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is satisfactory. Planning for lessons provides tasks to suit the ability of different pupils and useful attempts are made to assess how well they have done in them. Using the results of these assessments, leadership has already provided staff with sound guidance about how well pupils are learning and in what they need to improve. The curriculum makes a sound contribution to pupils' learning and development in most

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

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

instances. In sport, information and communication technology, French and Spanish the impact is stronger owing to some specialist teaching and close links with the local high school.

The care, support and personal guidance pupils receive are good. The school's climate prompted some pupils to announce, 'it's a wonderful school; everyone is very friendly'. Over half of the pupils thrive on the support given in after-school clubs. A partnership with a local table tennis club and after-school opportunities for archery and choir, for example, all make school life more enjoyable.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

Satisfactory leadership and management are growing in their effect because senior staff have created a climate in which everyone feels involved in making improvements, including pupils. They have all made a good start in the drive for higher standards. There just has not been time for much impact, although recent improvements in attainment in Year 6 signify a good beginning. Care is taken to consider the achievement of all pupils. The ambition is that individuals and groups will have the opportunities they need with no barriers to their progress. The effect of the school's promotion of equality is satisfactory at the moment until the potential of all pupils is maximized across the school. Parents, pupils and staff comment with justification on the good quality of the school's procedures for safeguarding pupils. Pupils feel safe and comfortable to seek help with their problems. The sense of community within school is extended by beneficial links in the local community and productive learning partnerships with other schools locally. Pupils are beginning to gain an international perspective by studying African village life with Catholic Sisters who pass on their first-hand experiences, but this global aspect of community cohesion is not, as yet, so well developed.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3

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	
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make satisfactory progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They experience a balanced blend of lively play and calm listening. They enter school with levels of attainment similar to those expected for their age and leave at the end of Reception broadly in line with national goals. Children's ability to speak clearly is generally weaker than other skills at the beginning of Nursery but this improves well as a result of the emphasis placed upon it. Similarly, progress is speeding up in writing. Children's understanding of letters and their sounds is improving owing to the engaging teaching children receive. For example, at the beginning of a session on letters, an adult announced, 'I've got a game for you'. Children gathered round and very quickly became glued to the activity. This picture of achievement results from the sound quality of provision in the setting. The accommodation inside and out allows for freely chosen play, direct instruction and quiet reflection. Children are placed in small family groups in which they feel safe and well cared for. Good relationships are underpinned by well-known routines. Sound and sometimes good teaching has a positive effect, which is only occasionally lessened by children not being exactly clear about what to do. A productive partnership with parents has been created, which helps in the assessment of children's learning and development. The acting leadership has a clear grasp of how to improve the setting and the effectiveness of plans so far is satisfactory.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
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

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

Views of parents and carers

The vast majority of those who responded to the questionnaire were very happy because their children enjoy school and are cared for well. There were no particular trends in the very small number of criticisms received. Inspectors agree with the positive views expressed about care and the effect this has on children's personal qualities. The inspection findings about children's progress in learning supports the few parents who believe this aspect could be better.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Mary's Catholic 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 143 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 323 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	165	59	105	38	5	2	4	1
The school keeps my child safe	209	75	69	25	0	0	2	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	150	54	123	44	4	1	2	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	150	54	108	39	7	3	8	3
The teaching is good at this school	159	57	107	38	7	3	2	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	128	46	133	48	9	3	4	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	147	53	128	46	0	0	2	1
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)	136	50	115	42	11	4	2	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	140	50	119	43	11	4	4	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	127	47	132	48	6	2	2	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	117	43	129	48	14	5	2	1
The school is led and managed effectively	150	55	118	43	0	0	2	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	166	62	93	35	4	1	2	1

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"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



Inspection of St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Batley, WF17 8PH

Thank you for your help when the inspection team visited your school. We thoroughly enjoyed our time with you. The welcome you gave us was warm and cheerful. I particularly enjoyed it when older children in the dining hall said, 'Hola', in Spanish. You say that there are lots of things to do at St Mary's and I agree. For example, table tennis and archery clubs seem particularly appealing to me – and I know they are popular with you. I know that you appreciate the school because the positive answers on our questionnaire left me in no doubt.

You go to a satisfactory school. It is an achievement for your acting headteacher, when you think of the changes that have taken place in the last couple of years. Your teachers now have a clear idea of what you can and cannot do. Therefore, lessons are planned so that you can make quicker progress. All this takes time and so far your progress in English and mathematics is satisfactory but it is improving, particularly in Years 5 and 6. The strong message from you was that you feel safe and well cared for by staff who are kind, helpful and considerate. As a result, you come to school regularly, behave well and develop generally into well-rounded young people by the time you leave.

I know everyone wants to do even better and I have asked your school to do three things to help. Your teachers need to help you do better in mathematics to keep up with the quicker progress you are making in reading and writing. Your senior staff need to learn more from the tests and your teachers' assessment of your work to make sure that your teachers set the right targets for you to reach in English and mathematics. Finally, the school should make sure that you are all fully aware of how well you are doing and what to do next to improve even more. You can all help by trying hard at any new challenges that come your way. I am sure you can do it.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.