

# St Marys Catholic Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	114566
<b>Local Authority</b>	East Sussex
<b>Inspection number</b>	338403
<b>Inspection dates</b>	17–18 May 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Gavin Jones

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>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	196
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Michael Dean
<b>Headteacher</b>	Maria Cowler
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	4 July 2007
<b>School address</b>	Chapel Green Crowborough TN6 2LB
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. In all, 16 lessons were observed, which included all teachers. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at planning documents, observation notes on teaching, reviews carried out by the local authority, minutes of governors' meetings and 53 parent and carer questionnaires.

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

- the achievement of all pupils and the progress they make in Key Stage 2
- the ways in which teachers use assessment to support their teaching
- the quality of leadership in the three key subjects the quality of care and its impact on pupils' personal development outcomes.

## Information about the school

This is an average-sized primary school in which the proportion of pupils with special education needs and/or disabilities is in line with the national average, although the proportion of pupils with statements for those needs is well above average. The main areas of need relate to language development. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is well below average, although it is rising steadily. There is a nursery on the school site, which is not managed by the governors of the school and therefore was not part of this inspection. There has been significant disruption to the school in the last 18 months, during which time there have been four headteachers. The new headteacher had only been in post for four weeks at the time of the inspection. The school has curriculum awards for its approach to healthy living, a sports award and an award for its art work.

**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

Evidence shows that whilst the school made progress following the last inspection, the many changes in senior leadership caused that progress to stall. As a result, the school finds itself still a satisfactory school. However, the new headteacher has established an increased vigour in the staffroom and morale is high. She has carried out rapid checks on the quality of practices across the school and has drawn up a plan for improvement which mirrors in many ways the recommendations of this report. She has formed a strong leadership team and is well supported by a governing body which is increasingly able to challenge and assist the school in making progress. This, together with the current support of the local authority, contributes to the school's satisfactory capacity to sustain further improvement.

Strengths in the school are seen in several aspects of pupils' personal development, including the way they feel safe in school, their behaviour, the ways they try to adopt healthy lifestyles and the way they are prepared for future education and life in general. Their spiritual, moral and social development are all good and stem largely from the all-pervading Catholic ethos of the school. Pupils' cultural development is satisfactory and links with the school's incomplete programme for community cohesion. Within the school, parish and local area it is good but beyond that it is highlighted by a range of individual activities, but these do not form a cohesive plan. The school engages well with its parents and carers and has effective partnerships with other schools and outside agencies. The school has good safeguarding procedures, especially in the ways it promotes fire safety, its comprehensive checks on all adults who work in the school and its risk assessment procedures.

□ Although pupils leave the school with attainment above the national average, their progress across the school is less well defined. There is some stalling in progress from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2, so that although attainment is above average by the end of Year 6, progress is no better than satisfactory. The school is already planning to re-examine transition between the two key stages in order to maintain progress. The satisfactory teaching and curriculum are not ensuring that improvements are made in pupils' progress. Marking does not give pupils a clear steer as to how they might improve and assessment is not always used well enough during lessons to help in planning work. In writing, in particular, boys are not achieving as well as they might and some of the potentially higher-attaining pupils are not challenged sufficiently. The quality of subject leadership is not universally good and this affects progress in those subjects where it is just satisfactory.

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

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- For pupils who have been at the school since Year 2, ensure that 100% make at least satisfactory progress in writing and that 25% make good progress by the time they reach Year 6 in July 2011, by:
  - strengthening the monitoring by subject leaders in order that they might check on progress more regularly
  - teachers providing clearer written feedback to pupils on how they might improve their work
  - tailoring planning so that it more accurately reflects the needs of all groups of pupils, including boys and higher attaining pupils
  - capturing the interests of boys to improve their motivation to write.
- Ensure that by July 2011, teaching and learning is good or better in the majority of lessons, with no teaching that is inadequate, by:
  - helping teachers to use assessment data more effectively in their planning
  - developing peer teacher observations and providing subject leaders with more opportunities to monitor teaching and learning in their subjects
  - making learning more active and interactive
  - embedding the use of assessment during lessons in order to check more regularly on pupils' understanding.
- Enhance the promotion of community cohesion, by:
  - providing opportunities for pupils to compare their lives with pupils in other areas of the United Kingdom
  - giving pupils a more developed understanding of their place in the global community.

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

The quality of learning and progress in lessons are both satisfactory. In some individual lessons, progress is good. In an outstanding ICT lesson, this was the case due to the outstanding knowledge and enthusiasm of the teacher. Whilst many lessons have an activity following initial teaching and discussion, the balance between pupils being active or listening is much more biased towards the latter. Although pupils are enthusiastic about their work and enjoy lessons, their concentration begins to drift in lessons where introductions are too long. As a result, learning outcomes are only satisfactory. When they are fully engaged, as in a lesson in numeracy where pupils were making shortbread to illustrate different proportions, their interest and participation were high. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are often supported well in class by a range of adults. Where this is the case, they too make at least satisfactory progress in their learning. The same can be said for pupils from a growing range of ethnic backgrounds. Their achievement is often good. Most pupils say they enjoy school, a view supported by parents. They say they feel safe, as they know that the school cares for them. Pupils say there is very little bullying and that whenever it occurs, adults are quick to intervene.

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Behaviour is good in lessons, where it supports learning, and on the playground. Pupils show a good understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle, although a very small number do not recognise how physical education aids health. They are very active at playtimes and in after-school clubs, reflected in awards the school has achieved for health and sport. Opportunities for pupils to voice their opinions are supported by the school council. Pupils generally contribute well to the school, the parish and the local community. However, their understanding of life in the rest of the United Kingdom and further afield is a little restricted. Pupils are rightly proud of the monies they have raised for charities.

*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>	2
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>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective is the provision?

Teaching and learning are satisfactory but at that level, they will not improve the satisfactory progress that pupils are currently making. Although teachers have good relationships with pupils, manage behaviour well and use clear planning formats for their lessons, they do not make enough use of the available data they have in order to set challenges that meet all the needs in their classes. This is particularly the case for higher

<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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achievers, who on occasions are not sufficiently challenged in their work. At the same time, whilst marking is carried out regularly, it is often limited in its comments which point to pupils' next steps in learning. The care and support given to vulnerable pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, is often good at an individual level, but currently is more satisfactory as, □ the recently appointed inclusion manager is still coming to terms with the role. In spite of that, there are examples where specific pupils have been supported well both currently and in previous years. The school recognises that the curriculum does not have enough links between subjects, in order that basic skills can be used across subject boundaries. Information and communication technology (ICT), singing and swimming are all strengths within the broad and balanced curriculum. The enrichment of the curriculum is good, with many visits and visitors clearly seen as learning activities rather than rewards. Within classes, pupils are sometimes not active enough and sit for too long on the carpet. They get very few opportunities to use such things as the interactive whiteboard.

*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>3</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

Staff and governors are united in their commitment to helping the school improve. However, their success in effecting improvement has been undermined by recent successive changes in the school's leadership. The new headteacher already has a clear and accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for development and has sensible priorities for improvement. Although senior leaders and managers are working towards school improvement, their skills and abilities are very different and some are not as successful as others. Assessment information is gathered and analysed by the senior leaders. Its use by class teachers is not as successful. The headteacher is aware of this and has noted it in the school's plans for further development. Governors have supported the school well through recent uncertain times and are now concentrating on gathering their own information through monitoring, in order that they might be in a better position to hold the school to account for its actions. Their links, and those of the school, with parents and carers are good and support pupils well in their learning. The school itself is developing good partnerships with a number of schools and institutions, through which they can improve the curriculum, moderate assessments and develop teaching and learning further. The range of support available across the school is satisfactory, although there are instances of very good practice. The inclusion manager

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understands the need to ensure that assessments, the clarification of needs and the use of adult support reinforces the school's good record of providing equal opportunities to all. The school is looking afresh at its audit of community cohesion, so that it might create new strategies to address the areas that are not as well developed as school, parish and local links. The headteacher and some subject leaders have had limited opportunities to assess the quality of teaching. Where this has been done, it is largely accurate, although insufficient emphasis is placed on monitoring 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>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</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>2</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

The good links with parents, as well as the good level of attention given to children's welfare, help children to settle quickly and happily into the Reception class. Their levels of skills when entering school are in line with those seen nationally for children of this age. However, their writing, communication and thinking skills are less well developed, whilst their attitudes and their creative development are much higher. They make sound overall progress, although much better progress is made in the weaker area of language and communication. Progress is less strong in pupils' recognition of the links between letters and sounds. Additional adults, including parent helpers, provide good support to children, especially those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and this ensures that all children participate fully. Assessment data is collected regularly and its accuracy has been monitored by the local authority. This data, which is now kept in individual assessment books, helps the leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage check on the progress children are making and use the information to inform planning.



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Children are learning to use ICT from an early age, including digital cameras, but there are missed opportunities for using other new technology such as the interactive whiteboard. Children are able and happy to make their own choices and daily activities include an appropriate balance between adult-led and child-initiated activities. The outside area is inadequate. Although the school does all it can to minimise the area's impact on children's physical development, this has implications for the way in which children are able to move from inside to outside areas at will. The school has plans in hand to develop a more suitable outside classroom for these children. Overall leadership is satisfactory but recent innovations show a more thoughtful and knowledgeable approach.

*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

The vast majority of parents and carers, nine out of ten, who responded to the questionnaire, were very positive about the school. With only two exceptions, parents and carers felt their children enjoyed school and that the school kept children safe. A small minority were concerned that the school did not deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour and did not take account of the views of parents. The inspection endorses the positive remarks but, whilst accepting the negative comments, many of them were related to incidents in the past.

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

The inspection team received 53 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 196 pupils registered at the school.

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.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	25	47	23	43	2	4	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	26	49	23	43	2	4	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	18	34	23	43	4	8	1	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	20	38	25	47	4	8	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	21	40	25	47	3	6	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	19	36	23	43	5	9	1	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	18	34	29	55	3	6	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)	11	21	30	57	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	17	32	28	53	5	9	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	17	32	19	36	7	13	2	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	14	26	21	40	7	13	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	13	25	29	55	2	4	1	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	26	49	18	34	2	4	1	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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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.**



19 May 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Crowborough TN6 2LB

I am writing to thank you for being so welcoming to myself and my two inspector colleagues when we visited your school very recently. I'm sure you would like to know what we found.

You attend a satisfactory school which has a number of good features. Here are some of the things we thought were good.

- You reach above average standards by the end of Year 6.
- The school is committed to helping all of you to succeed.
- You feel safe in school and the school's safeguarding is good, as is your behaviour.
- Many of you know about healthy eating and the school prepares you well for a move to your next school.
- Your spiritual, moral and social development are all good.
- The school is successful at making your parents feeling part of your education.
- There are many good links with other schools which support the work in your school.

Your new headteacher already has some ideas about what the school needs to do to improve and the staff are going to help make this happen. These are the things we have asked them to do.

- We want them to improve the progress you make in the junior classes  
especially in writing.
- Although some teaching is good, we want there to be even more good teaching by making sure that the work you receive challenges you more.
- We want the school to help you understand more about life in the rest of our country and beyond.

I hope you will do your best to keep up the good attendance and work hard.

Thank you for such an interesting visit.

Yours sincerely

Gavin Jones

Lead Inspector

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