

St Mary's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School, Bridlington

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118036
Local Authority	East Riding of Yorkshire
Inspection number	339127
Inspection dates	14–15 October 2009
Reporting inspector	Tom Grieveson HMI

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	210
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Carolyn Hayhurst
Headteacher	Mrs Elizabeth Cannings
Date of previous school inspection	1 January 2007
School address	George Street Bridlington YO15 3PS
Telephone number	01262 670138
Fax number	01262 670838
Email address	elizabeth.cannings@stmarysrcbrid.eril.net

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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

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 22 lessons, and held meetings with the headteacher, the chair of governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation including the school improvement plan, teachers' planning files, assessment information and a large selection of pupils' work in books and in lessons. Seventy one parental questionnaires were also evaluated, as well the results from a pupil and staff survey.

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

- how successfully the school's leadership has tackled the areas for improvement identified at the time of the previous inspection
- what the school is doing to ensure that all pupils achieve in line with their capabilities
- how effectively the school is monitoring the performance of pupils and how well teachers, and other staff, use this information when planning lessons so that the needs of all pupils are consistently met
- how effectively the curriculum is meeting the needs and aspirations of all pupils.

Information about the school

The school is situated to the south of Bridlington town centre serving the parish of Our Lady and St. Peter. While most pupils reside in the local area, many travel from further afield. St. Mary's is slightly smaller than average, although the number of pupils on the school roll has increased in recent years. A relatively high number of pupils join the school during the academic year. The proportion entitled to a free school meal is below average but is increasing, while the percentage with special educational needs and/or disabilities is higher than seen nationally. The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage. Early Years Foundation Stage provision consists of a Reception class. The school has Healthy School status, ICT Mark and has retained the Activemark each year since 2006. In March 2009, the school was successfully re-assessed for the Basic Skills Award.

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

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Effective leadership has ensured that St. Mary's is a good and improving school. Standards are rising and pupils make good progress in their learning. This improvement is underpinned by the successful work to develop the quality of teaching and learning and to ensure that the curriculum effectively meets the needs and interests of pupils. Together with accurate self-evaluation these strengths indicate a good capacity for the school to sustain improvement. Significant changes have also been made to ensure that staff track pupils' performance more rigorously. This information is used well to identify under-achievement and to target interventions to help pupils overcome their difficulties. This is often through very effective work to support those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, but does not extend to all those who need additional assistance. Nonetheless, not all teachers use this information as well as they should when all lessons are being planned. Where this occurs, tasks do not always meet pupils' needs well enough and this limits the progress of some pupils who are capable of more. This is particularly noticeable in mathematics, for while standards in this subject are clearly rising across the school, and more-able pupils are doing particularly well, greater effort is required to ensure that all pupils in all year groups consistently achieve as well as they should.

The large majority of classrooms are productive and busy places. Pupils enjoy their learning, work well with their peers and engage effectively with teachers and support assistants. Behaviour is consistently good and pupils' attitudes to their work are routinely positive. Most lessons promote good learning and are well organised. The majority of teaching is good and adults work well together. However, the use of support assistant time is not always effective in all parts of lessons. This is particularly the case at the beginning and end of sessions where assistants are underused and insufficiently engaged with the pupils. Lower ability pupils, in particular, are in need of their help at these times but do not always receive it.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all teachers make good use of assessment information when planning lessons so that the learning needs of all pupils are consistently met.
- Ensure that effective and routine use is made of the skills which teaching support assistants offer in all parts of lessons so that pupils receive the help they require at all times.
- Ensure that all pupils make the progress of which they are capable in mathematics.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Actions taken by the school to improve the quality of teaching and the curriculum have helped pupils to reach higher standards and to accelerate progress in their learning. Compelling evidence from the school's assessment procedures, the scrutiny of pupils' workbooks and from classroom observations, demonstrates that the majority of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are making good progress in all key stages. Attainment in Key Stage 1 is significantly above average and has been rising steadily since 2006 in reading, writing and mathematics. Provisional results from the 2009 national tests show that this improvement has continued. In Key Stage 2, standards are also improving well and in both 2007 and 2008 were much higher than at the time of the previous inspection and above average overall. Provisional test results for 2009 show a marked improvement in English standards with more-able pupils doing particularly well. Although overall results in mathematics were disappointing, again, more-able pupils did well.

Pupils say they feel safe in school and know they can rely on the support of adults if difficulties arise. They say that bullying is rare. Pupils' responsible attitudes show they have regard for their own safety and that of others. Their behaviour is good, both in lessons and around school. The large majority conduct themselves responsibly and readily follow instructions. Pupils talk with confidence about how to remain healthy. They understand the importance of exercise and enjoy taking part in the wide range of after-school activities and make good use of playground equipment to be active at lunchtimes. Older pupils take on many roles of responsibility within the school, including putting away playground equipment, and acting as 'playground leaders.' The school council takes a proactive role, deciding on fundraising issues, and selecting areas of the school for refurbishment. Pupils of all ages have been involved in preparing a funding bid to improve the school grounds.

Important links have been forged with local businesses, including builders' merchants and pet suppliers, to broaden pupils' understanding of the world of work. They have been part of a Science and Industry project aimed at developing enterprise skills, and Year 6 pupils have attended an enterprise conference. Pupils are also involved in evaluating the way in which governors and senior leaders use the school budget and how resources are allocated. Attendance is satisfactory and the rate of persistent absenteeism is very low. The school works hard to improve pupils' attendance, with particularly effective work targeted at hard to reach families.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and is reflected in positive attitudes to their work and each other. The majority show a willingness to take responsibility and demonstrate care for themselves, other pupils and the school buildings and grounds. Pupils talk confidently about their own beliefs. Through assemblies and the personal, social and health education programme they acquire an understanding of other faiths and a respect for the beliefs of others. Pupils talk about their own feelings and can empathise with those of others. They are reflective and considerate young people.

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

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
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	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is predominantly good, a small proportion is outstanding, while some is satisfactory. In almost all lessons work is well planned to meet the needs and abilities of the pupils. The pace is brisk and pupils are actively involved in activities which both stimulate and engage them in learning. Relationships with adults are very good and this provides a secure platform from which learning can occur. A generous complement of teaching assistants work alongside teachers. Most of the time their engagement with children is purposeful and leads to good progress, but this is not consistent throughout all lessons. Too often at the beginning and end of lessons, assistants are not sufficiently active in supporting pupils, some of whom, particularly the less-able, do not receive enough help.

The curriculum meets statutory requirements and is increasingly broad and balanced. Recent changes are making it possible to purposefully link subjects together, while ensuring the development of pupils' literacy skills is prioritised. The outcomes of this work are underpinning the strong improvement seen in pupils' achievements across the school. A strong ethos of 'caring for each other' pervades the work of the school, indeed

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

the care exhibited towards pupils receives high priority. There are good arrangements in place for identifying and supporting pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school is continually reviewing its support strategies to ensure pupils receive the additional help they need through a flexible system of intervention programmes. Pupils requiring additional targeted support, often in additional phonics or mathematics lessons, are helped to access the curriculum by a well trained and skilled team of support staff.

The school has significantly improved its assessment and target setting procedures. Information is regularly collated and areas for improvement identified. In most cases, this results in successful actions to improve learning and outcomes for pupils. However, not all teachers use this information well when planning lessons. There are examples of outstanding practice, particularly in Year 6, where assessment information helps the teacher to provide well targeted and challenging learning for pupils and results in at least good progress being made. This practice, however, is not consistently in place across the school. Where assessment information is not used well, sometimes inappropriate activities are provided which do not sufficiently engage pupils or improve their learning as well as they should.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The clear and purposeful leadership of the headteacher has securely focused the work of the school on raising standards and accelerating pupils' progress in their learning. This work is proving to be effective. Accurate self-evaluation provides senior and middle leaders with a secure understanding of the school's performance, with improvement plans targeted where progress is required the most. There is a strong emphasis on developing the skills of teachers and support staff. This is proving to be a powerful driver in improving the quality of teaching and learning and is underpinning the school's success in raising standards. Governors understand the strengths and weaknesses of the school and are compliant in carrying out their statutory responsibilities. However, while they are engaged in directly supporting the school's work and monitoring its performance, they are not always sufficiently challenging in holding senior leaders to account.

The large majority of parents are highly complimentary about the work of the school and the provision it makes for their children. They are well informed about their

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

children's progress and are offered opportunities to make their views known and to have influence on school decision making. The school is successful in promoting equality of opportunity. Staff engage successfully with a significant range of agencies to support pupils' development. Much is done to help all pupils enjoy the range of activities which the school provides, both within and beyond the teaching day. This includes actively pursuing sources of funding so that pupils from all backgrounds can access the full range of experiences on offer and which support their personal and academic development.

Safeguarding procedures are satisfactory with a number of good features.

All policies and procedures are in place and in most cases there are clear protocols for identifying risks. All staff have received recent safeguarding training. There is good partnership working with other agencies to support vulnerable pupils. The school employs an effective strategy for engaging with various parish and community groups, which involve pupils in regular community events and projects. The school does much to develop pupils' understanding of life in modern Britain, but is less effective in enabling pupils to connect more with minority ethnic communities. Extensive work to promote pupils' understanding of being global citizens is evident, particularly through very good projects regarding sustainability issues and links with organisations in the developing world. The school provides good value for money and has effectively addressed the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
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	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter the Reception class from a variety of different pre-school providers. They start school with a wide range of skills which are broadly in line with expectations for children of this age, although there is a wide spread of ability. They make good progress towards the early learning goals and quickly become confident and articulate learners.

Children form good relationships with adults and each other, learning to play cooperatively. They quickly develop independent skills, make sensible choices and are able to describe what they are doing and why. Children follow simple instructions, show an interest in the teacher-led activities and can select and direct others of their own choosing. They show a natural curiosity, for example, in examining different types of fruit, and are able to question and explore their ideas. The children are well behaved and have due regard for their own safety and that of others, for example, in outdoor role play activities.

The Early Years Foundation Stage environment provides a range of opportunities which successfully supports children's learning. Carefully planned activities enable children to learn through purposeful and enjoyable experiences. The Dinosaur museum, for example, created by staff and children, is stimulating and exciting and children are proud to show visitors around. Outdoor provision provides opportunities for children to play imaginatively and develop skills of cooperation. There is a strong focus on developing their speaking and listening skills.

The Reception class is well led and managed. Children are helped successfully to make a smooth transition from their various Nursery providers. Detailed assessments, including the collection of children's 'wow' moments, allow staff to measure progress and look for the next steps in learning. All staff are skilled in carrying out assessments and encourage parents and other adults to contribute to the overall picture of children's progress and development. At the end of Early Years Foundation Stage, transition to Key Stage 1 is well managed.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school. They are particularly appreciative of the leadership of the headteacher, the manner in which the school demonstrates care for the pupils and with their child's overall experience of school. Those parents who made additional written comments highlighted how much their children enjoyed school.

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

These views accord very closely with those of the inspection team.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Mary's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School, Bridlington 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 71 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 210 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	73	60	47	39	2	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	87	71	36	29	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	63	52	52	43	4	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	70	57	45	37	4	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	75	62	44	36	2	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	65	55	52	44	2	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	76	62	42	34	4	3	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)	58	50	50	43	3	3	2	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	59	53	50	45	2	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	71	58	43	35	4	3	2	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	50	41	66	54	4	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	87	73	29	24	2	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	85	69	37	30	2	2	0	0

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.



On behalf of the inspection team I would like to thank you for the way you welcomed us to the school and particularly to those school council members who met with us and shared their views about the school. The report is now complete and I would like to share our findings with you.

We found St. Mary's to be a good and improving school. The headteacher, governors and staff are working extremely hard to constantly develop your school and what it provides for you. We have judged almost all aspects to be good. We were particularly impressed by the way your headteacher and the staff have made improvements so that almost all lessons are good and the curriculum has been re-organised to better meet your needs and make learning more interesting. Good work has also been done to keep a check on your progress and we were encouraged to see the good quality extra help that is given to pupils who find some of their learning especially difficult. In all the lessons we visited and at all times in the playground we saw good behaviour. Well done! We were particularly impressed by how well you work together and look after each other. St. Mary's is a very caring school and one in which you and the staff are highly valued.

Even though you attend a good school we have asked your headteacher, the governors and staff to make improvements in three important areas. Firstly, to make sure that the information which teachers have about your work and progress is used well so that in all lessons, all of the time, the work you are given meets your needs. Secondly, to make sure that the teaching assistants are always working with you in all parts of the lesson so that you receive the help you require. Finally, while we could see how much improvement you have made in mathematics, we consider that some pupils could do even better.

I am sure that you can all think of ways in which you can help the staff to make these improvements. Thank you again for your help during the inspection, it was a pleasure to meet you all. Please accept our very best wishes for the future in all that you do.

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