

St Mary's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123556
Local Authority	Telford and Wrekin
Inspection number	340366
Inspection dates	9–10 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Melvyn Hemmings

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	93
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Joan Beard
Headteacher	Mrs Margaret Young
Date of previous school inspection	20 June 2007
School address	Coronation Crescent Madeley Shropshire
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They spent two thirds of their time looking at learning and visited 14 lessons or parts of lessons. Inspectors observed six teachers and held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils and the school's improvement partner. They observed the school's work, and looked at school policies, records of meetings, assessment information and curriculum planning. In addition, 19 parent and carer questionnaires were received and analysed.

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

- the impact of strategies introduced to raise standards, particularly in English and mathematics
- whether there is consistency of teaching and learning between classes
- how effectively the restructured senior leadership team monitors and evaluates the school's performance
- the extent to which pupils are involved in evaluating what they need to do next to improve.

Information about the school

This smaller than average school has Early Years Foundation Stage provision in a mixed Reception and Year 1 class. There are three other classes, all with mixed year groups. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of educational needs, is below average. Most pupils are White British. The senior leadership team has been recently restructured. The school has gained a number of awards, including the Healthy School's Award.

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

The school provides a welcoming and friendly environment in which to learn, firmly based on Christian values. The care and well-being of pupils is at the heart of the school's work and this is much appreciated by parents and carers. Pupils say they are looked after well and feel safe and secure in school.

The headteacher provides clear educational direction that is focused on driving up standards. Self-evaluation is accurate and usually enables leaders to identify and prioritise areas for development. Action taken has led to much-improved standards of behaviour and pupils improving their reading and mathematical calculation skills. Plans reflect what the school needs to do to consolidate success and gain further improvement. Governors are supportive of the school but are not fully engaged in planning for long-term improvement. Established management systems enable the school to run smoothly. The monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning is not sharp enough to iron out inconsistencies in teaching and learning. The capacity to improve is satisfactory.

Pupils make satisfactory progress and by the end of Year 6 attain broadly average standards in English, mathematics and science. This represents satisfactory achievement from their skill levels on entering school. Strategies introduced since the last inspection have raised standards in reading and mathematical calculation skills but have been less successful in improving pupils' writing. Pupils do not use accurate vocabulary, punctuation and spelling when constructing sentences. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to practise and enhance their skills by writing purposefully across the curriculum. In mathematics, pupils have sound calculation skills but are less proficient at using these to solve real-life number problems.

Inconsistency in teaching and learning between classes is the main reason for progress being satisfactory rather than better. Teachers do not always use assessment information effectively to challenge pupils of different ability, particularly those who are more able. Progress is restricted at times because pupils are not given enough opportunity to explore ideas for themselves. The use of the outdoor area for children in Reception does not fully support their learning.

Pupils have constructive attitudes to learning, showing curiosity and enjoyment in their activities. Their involvement in evaluating how well they are doing and what to do next to improve, is at an early stage of development. A wide range of enrichment activities extend the curriculum and add further variety to pupils' learning.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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- Raise standards, particularly in writing and mathematics by:
 - improving pupils' skills in constructing sentences accurately and providing more opportunities to write purposefully across the curriculum
 - improving pupils' ability in applying their mathematical calculation skills to solve real-life number problems.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by:
 - ensuring teachers use assessment information consistently in order to set challenging work that matches pupils' different abilities, particularly for those who are more able
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to explore ideas for themselves
 - involving pupils effectively in deciding for themselves how they might improve their work.
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
 - sharpening the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning
 - developing the skills of governors in planning for long-term school improvement.
- Make effective use of the outdoor area for children in the Reception class to support their learning.
- 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 are enthusiastic and eager to do well. They are interested in their activities and work well with others to complete tasks. Pupils willingly contribute to class and group discussions and appreciate the ideas and suggestions of others. They especially enjoy practical activities, as was seen when pupils in a Year 3/4 mathematics lesson were investigating patterns within multiplication tables. Pupils enjoy books and read well but lack accuracy when constructing sentences in their writing activities. Pupils have secure mathematical calculation skills but are less adept in using these to solve real-life number problems. They have sound scientific investigational skills and confidently use information and communication technology to support work in other subjects. There is no significant difference between the achievements of different groups. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make the same progress as other pupils because of the extra support they receive.

Pupils behave well and are polite and considerate. They are willing to reflect on their experiences and show respect for other people's feelings and values. They make a good contribution to school life by taking on responsibilities, including being a member of the school council. They contribute well to the wider community, such as by working with Madeley Parish Council on traffic surveys and litter-picking. Pupils care about the issues facing their local community and are currently involved in supporting the regeneration of

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Madeley. Pupils know and understand the important factors that affect their health. Most of them have adopted a healthy lifestyle, taking regular exercise and eating a balanced diet. Pupils are soundly prepared for the next stage of education and their future lives.

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	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teachers have secure subject knowledge and this enables them to explain ideas clearly and confidently. They plan carefully to ensure the needs of the different year groups in classes are met. Good classroom management means little time is lost in learning. Teachers update pupils about their progress and how to improve through marking and discussion. Pupils' self-assessment skills are not well developed. In some lessons there is too much teacher direction and this limits opportunity for pupils to work independently and take responsibility for their own learning. At times, the work given to pupils lacks sufficient challenge, particularly for those who are more able. Teaching assistants provide valuable support for all pupils, particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Relationships are good and contribute to the friendly and calm atmosphere evident in all classes.

¹ 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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The curriculum is enlivened by whole school topic days, such as a recent one on fossils, in which pupils of all age ranges mix and work together in friendship groups. This makes a good contribution to their personal and social development. A wide variety of out of school activities, including sports, dance, sewing and gardening clubs are well attended. Educational visits, including a residential stay for pupils in Year 6, and opportunities to work with visitors that include professional sports coaches, enhance pupils' skills and widen their experiences. Opportunities for pupils to refine and extend their writing skills by writing purposefully across the curriculum are limited. The curriculum promotes pupils' personal development well, as reflected in the gaining of the Healthy School's Award.

The school is a safe learning setting for all pupils. Rigorous child protection procedures ensure staff know the procedures to follow if they have concerns about the well-being of a pupil. Comprehensive risk assessments are in place for activities in and around school and on visits. Arrangements for the care of all pupils, including those who are potentially vulnerable, contribute to their well-being and support their learning. Transition arrangements throughout the school and on to secondary school are well organised and effective in promoting pupils' development. Good links with outside agencies ensure extra support for individual pupils is available when required.

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?

The newly formed senior leadership team drive the school forward satisfactorily by ensuring all staff are focused on the key areas of development. They carry out their responsibilities diligently and have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Nonetheless, their monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning lacks sharpness. Lesson observations are carried out regularly and identify areas for development. Subsequent observations do not rigorously follow these up if they have been improved. The promotion of equal opportunity and tackling of discrimination is sound, with the school checking this aspect against the performance of different groups. This has enabled leaders, rightly, to identify the need to ensure consistency of challenge for pupils, especially those who are more able. Leaders actively promote community cohesion within the school and pupils from different backgrounds get on well with each other. The school is working to strengthen engagement with a range of groups beyond the school and the immediate community. Governors know the school's strengths and

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weaknesses but are not fully involved in planning strategically to bring about improvement. All safeguarding requirements are met and arrangements are regularly reviewed. The school works effectively with other agencies to reduce the risk of harm to pupils. Relationships with parents and carers are good, with the school helping them support their children's learning in a variety of ways.

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
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	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's attainment on entry often varies greatly from year to year because of the nature of small cohorts. The school's provision ensures that children make satisfactory progress and achieve satisfactorily, whatever their starting points. Adults know the needs of children of this age and provide practical activities that are based on children's own experiences. As a result, children show interest and enthusiasm in all they do. This was evident in their role play of the story of Cinderella. Children are encouraged to make choices for themselves and this contributes to their development as independent learners. Their behaviour is good and they work well together in pairs and small groups, taking turns and sharing fairly. The independent learning activities sometimes lack sufficient focus, with the emphasis being on what children are to do rather than what they are to learn. The organisation and use of the outdoor area does not fully support children's development across all areas of learning. Leadership ensures that safeguarding procedures are secure and staff are aware of the steps to take in the event of a safeguarding issue. Parents and carers appreciate the way they are informed about the progress their children make.

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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

Views of parents and carers

Most parents and carers who responded to inspection questionnaires were positive about the school's work and the efforts of all staff. Two comments were typical of many, 'My children are very happy at this school. The teaching staff are very approachable and are happy to address any concerns that I may have.' and 'My child enjoys being in school and likes the lessons and creative ways topics are taught.' A very small minority did not agree that the school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour. There was no such behaviour during the inspection and pupils say it is dealt with promptly if it occurs. A few indicated that the school did not take account of their suggestions and concerns. Inspection evidence does not support this view.

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 19 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 93 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	15	79	4	21	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	17	89	1	5	1	5	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	16	84	2	11	1	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	13	68	6	32	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	15	79	4	21	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	14	74	5	26	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	14	74	4	21	1	5	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)	12	63	6	32	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	14	74	5	26	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	14	74	3	16	2	11	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	14	74	4	21	1	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	16	84	3	16	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	15	79	3	16	1	5	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.



11 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Madeley, TF7 5EJ

Thank you for the friendly welcome you gave us when we visited your school. We enjoyed meeting you and seeing the many interesting things you do. Yours is a friendly school that helps you make satisfactory progress.

What we found out about your school

You behave well and this contributes to the happy and welcoming atmosphere in the school.

You are keen to learn and enjoy coming to school.

Adults look after you well and make sure you are safe, in and around school and on visits.

Many of you take part in the after school clubs that the school provides.

You enjoy taking on responsibilities, such as being a member of the school council.

In your questionnaires you say adults are interested in your views and you learn a lot in lessons.

The headteacher, staff and governors are working hard to help you do better.

What we have asked your school to do now

Improve your writing skills and your ability to solve number problems in mathematics.

Make sure teachers always use assessment information to set work that matches your individual needs and provide more opportunities to explore ideas for yourselves.

Check teaching and learning more carefully to make sure you are always challenged to think hard and make good progress.

Make better use of the outdoor area for children in Reception to support their learning.

All of you are a credit to your school and can help it improve further by continuing to try your best in your activities.

Yours sincerely

Melvyn Hemmings

Lead inspector

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