

St Mary's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

| | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 125708 |
| Local Authority | Warwickshire |
| Inspection number | 340825 |
| Inspection dates | 11–12 February 2010 |
| Reporting inspector | Barbara Atcheson |

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 | 143 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Vince Quayle |
| Headteacher | Mitchell Jones |
| Date of previous school inspection | 2 November 2006 |
| School address | Daventry Road Southam Warwickshire |
| Telephone number | 01926812512 |
| Fax number | 01926812521 |
| Email address | admin3505@we-learn.com |

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 2010

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The majority of inspection time was spent observing learning. The inspectors visited 11 lessons and observed all of the six teachers. Inspectors also held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at school policies, governors' minutes, planning documents, pupils' work and questionnaires returned from 88 parents and carers.

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

- the achievement of groups of pupils to determine whether teaching is sufficiently challenging
- the effectiveness of leaders at all levels in raising standards and bringing about consistently good teaching and learning
- the development of international and national dimensions to promote community cohesion.

Information about the school

This is a small school. Most of the pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of children with special educational needs is below the national average. Their needs mainly relate to specific learning difficulties. Children in Nursery and Reception were organised into one Early Years Foundation Stage unit in September 2009. Over the past year, four teachers have been off on long-term sick leave. The headteacher was appointed in April 2009. There is a privately run after-school club, which is inspected separately.

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

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

This is a school which has undergone a rapid improvement in a very short space of time as a result of the good leadership of the new headteacher, ably supported by the senior leadership team. United in their determination to raise standards and expectations, they have identified what needs to be done and put in place measures that are already leading to improvements. Consequently, the school has successfully emerged from a period of uncertainty when a significant proportion of the teaching was inadequate, a large proportion of pupils made inadequate progress and the provision for Early Years Foundation Stage and for pupils with special educational needs was judged to be inadequate by the local authority. In response, the headteacher, with the support of the senior leadership team, the backing of the governing body and important help and advice from the local authority, made a number of major changes to ensure that all pupils receive their entitlement. Staffing has been stabilised, the percentage of good teaching and the proportion of pupils making good progress has been increased and the provision for special educational needs and the Early Years Foundation Stage has been transformed. This, together with the school's carefully considered plan for development, based on accurate self-evaluation, clearly demonstrates that the school has a satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement. However, the school recognises that there is still more work to do because these improvements, although secure, are very recent and their full impact has yet to be realised. Links with parents are satisfactory. Whilst the majority of parents are very keen to articulate their positive views of the school, the letters, meetings and personal interviews held by the school have yet to convince a small minority of parents of the true value of the measures taken to secure improvement.

Although attainment is above average, and learning and progress are now improving, pupils' achievement is only satisfactory because the legacy of inadequate teaching slowed the pace of their progress. The increase in the proportion of good teaching, together with accurately targeted interventions, means that gaps in learning are being closed. However, in a few mathematics lessons, pupils lack the skills they need to tackle work effectively. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Whilst some good and some outstanding teaching was observed, not all teachers use assessment effectively to match work accurately to the specific needs of the pupils and so some find the work either too hard or too easy. Learning intentions are not always made clear and this leads to confusion. In the very small minority of lessons where this occurs, teaching and learning are inadequate.

Pupils are motivated and say that their work is interesting and enjoyable because the curriculum is appropriately matched to their needs. Attendance is average and pupils'

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

behaviour is good. They are polite and thoughtful and are knowledgeable about what makes a healthy lifestyle. They feel secure and have a heightened awareness of safety because of the good levels of safeguarding that exist. Whilst the school's community is a cohesive one, the school does not do enough to teach pupils about life in other parts of the country. Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Much of what is done is very new and, although some good practice exists, areas such as outdoor learning have not been fully developed.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By July 2010, improve the progress that pupils make in mathematics so that it becomes consistently good or better by ensuring that all pupils are confidently able to choose the correct methods to apply to their work.
- By July 2010, improve the quality of teaching and learning so that it becomes consistently good or better by:
 - ensuring that all teachers use assessment to match work accurately to the needs of the pupils
 - ensuring that pupils are clear about the learning intention in every lesson.
- By July 2010, improve pupils' awareness of the cultural diversity in Great Britain by fostering links with a contrasting school so that pupils can gain first-hand experience of meeting pupils from other backgrounds and cultures.
- 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' above average attainment at the end of Year 6 represents satisfactory progress in relation to pupils' above average attainment in their Year 2 assessments. Progress has been very uneven but it is now beginning to accelerate so that pupils are catching up on some previous underachievement. For example the learning gap for a group of Year 3 pupils, who had previously underachieved, closed as they made outstanding progress in an exciting literacy lesson designed to stimulate a rich use of language. By contrast, pupils in a mathematics lesson made inadequate progress because they were unsure about what they had to do and lacked the confidence to choose the correct methods for the task. This shows that, although the extent to which pupils are making good progress has increased considerably, there is still some uneven progress in lessons. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities now receive consistently good support and this enables them to make good progress. Their learning is tailor-made to their specific needs and teaching assistants are skilled in structuring the small steps that help them to build on what they have learnt before.

The positive ethos that results from the good care that pupils receive enables them to develop good personal qualities. They work and play harmoniously, come to school regularly and their behaviour is good. They say there is very little bullying and know that

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

there will always be someone who will listen to them. Pupils are knowledgeable about how to stay safe and have a good understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle. They enjoy a healthy choice at lunchtime and fruit for their break. They are proud to be members of the school council and of the part they played in choosing the new headteacher.

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 | 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 | 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 | 3 |
| 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?

Pupils enjoy lessons where teaching is focused and purposeful and they can play an active role in their learning. Pupils in Years 2 and 3 loved working on long pieces of paper to music as they described what they saw, heard and felt about the large-scale painting they had just completed. The teacher's expectations were high, and the pupils, in turn, pronounced the lesson, 'The best ever!' Year 6 quickly and accurately converted units of measure because the quality of teaching was good, the pace of learning was swift, there were good opportunities to consolidate and strategies to strengthen their learning. However, inconsistencies in the quality of teaching remain. For example, pupils made inadequate progress in a mathematics lesson because they were 'muddled', the

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

work was not precisely matched to their learning needs, and they lacked the confidence to apply the appropriate skills to carry it out. In some lessons, pupils find work either too easy or too hard.

Where teachers use assessment proficiently and have good subject knowledge, learning is carefully structured to meet the needs of all pupils regardless of gender, ethnicity or ability. In a Year 6 mathematics lesson, pupils settled quickly to the task in hand, learning moved at a good pace and, although pupils predicted that they would find the work 'tricky', they enjoyed the lesson and said that they were 'learning a lot'. The majority of pupils know their targets and most of the teachers' marking helps them to improve their work and to know their next steps in learning.

The curriculum supports learning appropriately. It has been recently reviewed by the new headteacher and senior leaders, who recognised the need to make it more creative and, at the same time, plug the learning gaps left by the legacy of inadequate teaching. Important interventions have been put into place and information and communication technology is used effectively as a teaching aid and a tool for learning. Pupils say they enjoy clubs such as cross country running and football and Year 6 benefit from a residential week of outdoor activities.

Over a very short period of time, the school has revolutionised the work that it does with vulnerable pupils so that they now receive the right support to enable them to make good progress in their work and to develop social and life skills. Strong relationships, good care and guidance, and productive links with a range of agencies ensure that these pupils and their families make the best of the opportunities provided by the school.

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 dynamic approach of the headteacher is bringing about major improvements at a brisk pace. Senior leaders work hard and share his enthusiasm and staff are motivated to focus on priorities and improve the quality of teaching and learning. As a result, the school has made significant strides towards accelerating progress and bringing about more good teaching. All teachers are now held to account through pupil progress meetings where the school's accurate tracking system highlights any underperformance. However, although senior leaders coach teachers and support them well, small pockets of only satisfactory and inadequate practice still exist. The introduction of a rigorous

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

tracking system and the reorganisation of the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is testament to the school's commitment to actively promote equality of opportunity and tackle discrimination.

Governors make sure that they are well informed and they, too, know the school well. They challenge and support where and when necessary and have played important roles in supporting the changes that have taken place. Procedures for safeguarding are good and ensure that all pupils feel safe and that their emotional and social needs are met. Checks on the suitability of adults to work with children are thorough and child protection arrangements are secure and updated regularly. There is a satisfactory strategy in place to promote community cohesion. The school's analysis shows that, although plans are in hand, not enough has been done to enhance pupils' understanding of British cultural diversity.

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 | 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 | 2 |
| 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 start school with levels of knowledge, skills and understanding in line with those expected for their ages. Last year, because the quality of teaching and learning and children's progress were inadequate, the majority entered Year 1 below the expected level. With the introduction of the new Early Years Foundation Stage unit, the quality of teaching has improved, assessment is accurate and progress has accelerated. The environment is bright and inviting. Children settle quickly into the welcoming atmosphere because personal development is good, relationships are strong and children are well cared for. Staff foster positive attitudes to learning and, as a result,

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

children behave well, are confident and sustain their concentration well. They enjoy taking orders in the cafe, where helpful adult interaction extends their speaking and listening skills. Baking fortune cookies and making the dragon's head for their Chinese New Year dance provided good opportunities to understand and play a part in how things change. However, on a few occasions, learning is sometimes directed rather than nurtured and supported, and this does not always give children sufficient opportunities to make their own choices. Children enjoy working in the outside area. However, currently this is not used to cover all of the elements of the curriculum that are found indoors. Although new, the Early Years Foundation Stage leader has a clear vision and inspection evidence shows the important changes that have been made are already beginning to have a positive impact on raising attainment and improving the rate of progress.

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

Although the majority of parents have positive views of the school, a number expressed concerns regarding their child's progress and the quality of teaching. Evidence from the inspection shows that pupils have underperformed in the past, when a significant proportion of the teaching was inadequate. The quick action taken by the headteacher to stabilise staffing and close learning gaps has resulted in an increase in the proportion of good teaching and good progress made by pupils. Some parents expressed concerns that their child's needs were not being met by the school. Evidence from the inspection shows that whilst provision for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities was at one time inadequate, a change of staffing and a new approach has brought about a transformation, with the majority of these children now making good progress from their starting points. A minority of parents felt that the school did not take account of their views and that the school is not led and managed effectively. Evidence from the inspection shows that the majority of these views related to the hard but necessary line that the school has had to adopt in order to bring about the changes that have resulted in improved rates of progress, levels of attainment and quality of teaching.

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 88 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 143 pupils registered at the school.

| Statements | Strongly Agree | | Agree | | Disagree | | Strongly disagree | |
|---|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|----|-------------------|----|
| | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % |
| My child enjoys school | 40 | 45 | 40 | 45 | 8 | 9 | 0 | 0 |
| The school keeps my child safe | 38 | 43 | 44 | 50 | 4 | 5 | 2 | 2 |
| The school informs me about my child's progress | 9 | 10 | 60 | 68 | 16 | 18 | 2 | 2 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school | 11 | 13 | 56 | 64 | 19 | 22 | 1 | 1 |
| The teaching is good at this school | 12 | 14 | 50 | 57 | 13 | 15 | 2 | 2 |
| The school helps me to support my child's learning | 21 | 24 | 47 | 53 | 15 | 17 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle | 21 | 24 | 53 | 60 | 10 | 11 | 2 | 2 |
| 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) | 17 | 19 | 55 | 63 | 6 | 7 | 0 | 0 |
| The school meets my child's particular needs | 17 | 19 | 49 | 56 | 16 | 18 | 2 | 2 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour | 16 | 18 | 53 | 60 | 11 | 13 | 3 | 3 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns | 25 | 28 | 41 | 47 | 8 | 9 | 9 | 10 |
| The school is led and managed effectively | 31 | 35 | 38 | 43 | 6 | 7 | 11 | 13 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school | 26 | 30 | 41 | 47 | 14 | 16 | 6 | 7 |

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.



13 February 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Southam CV47 1PS

Thank you for being so friendly when we visited your school. We enjoyed visiting

- your lessons and talking to you. You really helped us. We think your school gives you
- a satisfactory standard of education and there are quite a lot of good things about your school. These are the main things that helped us come to this conclusion.

The new Early Years Foundation Stage unit gives children a happy and settled start to their school life.

You enjoy school, behave well and come to school regularly.

Teaching is satisfactory. Some of your lessons really help you to do your best but there are some which do not help you so much.

You achieve levels which are above those expected for your age.

The school provides interesting lessons and a wide range of extra activities.

You have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles and how to keep safe.

The teachers look after you well.

Your new headteacher and his staff are working hard to make learning better for you.

We have asked the school to do three things.

Help you to do better in mathematics by making sure that you understand what you have to do and how to carry it out.

Make sure that all teaching is good by ensuring that work is neither too easy or too hard for you, and that you all know and understand what you are expected to learn.

Make sure that senior leaders improve your knowledge of life in this country by making links with a school that has pupils from different backgrounds to yours.

We hope that you will all continue to enjoy coming to school and to try your hardest so that you are successful in the future.

Yours sincerely

Barbara Atcheson

Lead inspector

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.