

# St Mary's Church of England Middle School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	131222
<b>Local Authority</b>	Northumberland
<b>Inspection number</b>	341112
<b>Inspection dates</b>	3–4 February 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Paul Hancock HMI

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>	Middle deemed secondary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	9–13
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	84
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Martin Straker
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Lynne Brookes
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Williams Way Belford Northumberland NE70 7NX
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector. The inspectors visited 11 lessons and held meetings with governors, staff, and representatives of the local community. Inspectors met and talked with students in lessons and around the school. They observed the school's work and looked at 49 questionnaires completed by parents and carers, and others from students and staff. The proportion of time spent on observation of students' learning and personal development amounted to over 80% of available time, taking into account looking at lunchtime and other social activities, and all available teachers were seen. Students' work and school documentation, such as safeguarding information and records of students' progress, were examined.

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

- how successful the school has been at making improvements since the last inspection and maintaining the judgement of being a good school
- how well all groups of students achieve, learn and make progress, particularly those with special educational needs and boys at Key Stage 2
- the pace and challenge of the teaching, and the extent of improvement in assessment practice
- the rigour and accuracy of the school's self-evaluation.

## Information about the school

St Mary's is a much smaller than average middle school located in a rural village in north east Northumberland. Many students come from average social and economic circumstances. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities or with a statement of special educational needs is above average. The number of students from minority ethnic groups and those who do not speak English as their first language is below average.

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

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

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**3**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**3**

## Main findings

St Mary's is a satisfactory school which is quickly improving. Following the previous inspection, performance declined in the first two years until the school took action. For example, a new senior leadership team with a clear vision for improvement was appointed. The changes put in place have already made an impact. Behaviour has significantly improved which was a concern of students and parents.

Attainment, achievement and the quality of learning are satisfactory and rising. Attainment in English and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 was average in 2009. All groups of students, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and boys at Key Stage 2, make satisfactory progress. Students say they feel safe and they particularly enjoy learning when work is well matched to their individual needs and interests. The school has already made raising achievement and attainment a high priority and is implementing an effective programme for improvement.

Inspection evidence confirms the school's judgement that the quality of teaching is satisfactory. The proportion of good teaching is increasing and the school is taking the right action to make improvements, for example, by ensuring students' work is always well matched to their abilities. Assessment practice is satisfactory. Students are not always clear about how to improve their work.

Behaviour is satisfactory and improving. Attendance is above average and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strong feature of the school. The curriculum is satisfactory and a wider range of extra-curricular activities has recently been introduced, such as the choir club. The school's strategy to promote community cohesion at local level is good and is satisfactory at national and international level. Students are well cared for guided and supported and partnerships to promote learning are satisfactory.

Leadership, management and governance are satisfactory and senior leaders are well supported by the governing body. They have introduced new systems for monitoring and evaluating students' work to ensure accountability at all levels. Resources are effectively deployed to achieve satisfactory value for money. Capacity to improve is satisfactory and the school's current evaluation of its own performance by senior leaders is accurate.

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

- Make sure that attainment, achievement and progress are at least good, by:
  - ensuring that all learning and work is well matched to students' individual

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needs and abilities.

- monitoring the individual progress of all students more frequently and with more rigour.
- Significantly increase the proportion of good and better teaching by:
  - more effectively matching work to students' abilities
  - improving the quality of feedback to students on how they can improve.
- Ensure that behaviour is always good by:
  - consistently implementing the school's new behaviour policy.
- 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**

Attitudes to learning are positive and students are keen to succeed. They show sustained concentration and commitment when the work is well matched to their individual needs. Students respond particularly well when they are involved in practical activities to further their learning. Not all work and learning is sufficiently well matched to individual needs and abilities, and attainment, achievement and progress are constrained as a result.

Attainment is average and all different groups of students, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make satisfactory progress. The progress of boys in the higher years is similar to the girls. Attainment in English and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 was average in 2009. Challenging targets are being used more effectively to drive progress and achievement. The school is making the right changes to make progress more rapid, for example introducing a new individual student tracking system and revising lesson plans to make sure learning is well matched to ability at all times.

Behaviour is satisfactory and improving as a result of recent changes, such as the rigorous application of a new behaviour policy which has increased students' awareness of what is right and wrong. The large majority of students say they feel safe in school and they have a satisfactory understanding of what constitutes a healthy diet and lifestyle.

The curriculum makes a satisfactory contribution to students' future economic well-being. Students are increasingly contributing to the school and to the wider community through their activities, for example, through the school orchestra led by a community volunteer. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school's work and attendance is good.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	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
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>3</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>3</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?**

Inspection evidence confirms the school's view that the quality of teaching is satisfactory and good teaching was seen. This was characterised by good use of subject expertise and detailed knowledge of students' starting points to challenge thinking and expand individual understanding at a good pace.

Where teaching quality is not as high, work and tasks are insufficiently well differentiated to cater for all needs in the same class and students are not always provided with clear, detailed steps to help them improve their work. The school has made increasing the proportion of good and better teaching a high priority in order to significantly raise achievement and attainment. Assessment practice is satisfactory and the use of information to review progress and set new targets is well set to quickly improve because new and more effective systems are being used.

The satisfactory curriculum meets statutory requirements. Creative staffing arrangements ensure older students are taught by specialists in most subjects which meets their interests well. Work with partners such as local schools to support transition is a feature of the satisfactory care, guidance and support. The limited range of extra-curricular activities has recently improved.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<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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<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?**

Clear vision by senior leaders and the governors is making sure that the school continues to improve. They are deeply committed to the school's further improvement. Leadership and management at all levels are satisfactory and the recent appointment of subject leaders is starting to make an impact. Governance is satisfactory and systems of accountability are increasingly more effective.

Relationships with parents and a range of partners work well. There are clear channels for parents and carers to communicate with the school and the very large majority who responded to the questionnaire say they are successfully involved in decisions about their children's learning and development. Discrimination and barriers to learning are tackled effectively through the satisfactory promotion of equal opportunities.

Community cohesion at local level is good and more local volunteers are now working in the school. Cohesion is satisfactory at national and international levels and the school is starting to develop better links with more widespread communities. Safeguarding procedures are satisfactory. It is recognised more can be done, for example, developing the child protection policy.

*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>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>

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**The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money****3**

## Views of parents and carers

The response from the very large majority of parents and carers agreed that the school is well led, keeps their children safe and that they were happy with their children's experience at the school. A few parents were concerned about some unacceptable behaviour and if their children were making enough progress at the school. These concerns were investigated during the inspection. Inspection evidence confirmed the school's view that behaviour has significantly improved. It is taking effective action to make sure the progress of students is always good.



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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Mary's Church of England Middle 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 inspector received 49 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 84 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	18	36	26	52	3	6	3	6
The school keeps my child safe	19	38	28	56	1	2	1	2
The school informs me about my child's progress	15	30	26	52	5	10	4	8
My child is making enough progress at this school	16	32	23	46	7	14	4	8
The teaching is good at this school	17	34	26	52	4	8	2	4
The school helps me to support my child's learning	13	26	26	52	6	12	2	4
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	17	34	25	50	4	8	2	4
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)	13	26	28	56	4	8	2	4
The school meets my child's particular needs	16	32	25	50	5	10	3	6
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	16	32	24	48	7	14	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	15	30	21	42	5	10	3	6
The school is led and managed effectively	21	42	20	40	3	6	2	4
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	21	42	22	44	4	8	2	4

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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	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"><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.**



5 February 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of St Mary's Church of England Middle School, Belford, NE70 7NX

Thank you for all your help when I inspected your school with my colleagues. Please would you pass on my thanks to your parents and carers for returning the questionnaires and say we took all their views into account. I thought you might like to know what we thought about your school.

- St Mary's is a satisfactory school which is quickly improving.
- Attainment, achievement and the quality of learning are satisfactory and rising.
- You feel safe and well cared for, guided and supported.
- Behaviour has significantly improved.
- The proportion of good teaching is increasing.
- The senior leadership team, governors and subject leaders are making the right improvements to help you achieve more highly.

Your teachers and the staff want to make the school even better. To help them do this, I have asked if they would:

- make sure you achieve as well as you can and make the best progress possible
- significantly increase the proportion of good and better teaching
- ensure your behaviour is always good at all times.

I know the staff would appreciate your help and I wish you every success in all you do in the future.

Yours sincerely

Paul Hancock

Her Majesty's Inspector

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