

St Mary's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118195
Local Authority	Isle of Wight
Inspection number	358285
Inspection dates	22–23 June 2011
Reporting inspector	Christopher Grove

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	171
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Christine Behan
Headteacher	Jo Anderson
Date of previous school inspection	9 October 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The school is federated with St Thomas of Canterbury Catholic Primary School in Newport under one governing body. The two schools share an executive headteacher. Inspectors observed 16 lessons taught by nine teachers. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, with members of the governing body and with staff. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at analyses of pupils' attainment and progress, records of governing body meetings, the school's development planning and documents relating to monitoring, safeguarding and the curriculum. Inspectors analysed inspection questionnaires returned by 84 parents and carers as well as those completed by 24 members of staff and 78 pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The extent of the current progress of pupils, including the progress of those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- How well teaching provides challenge for the different pupil groups, and how successfully assessment is used to support pupils' learning and progress.
- The impact of the school's self-evaluation arrangements in improving pupil performance and the quality of teaching and learning.
- How well the school promotes the strands of community cohesion, especially at the national and international levels.

Information about the school

St Mary's Catholic Primary is smaller than the average primary school. Most pupils are of White British heritage, and others are from a range of ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. The number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, principally speech, language and communication difficulties, is well below average. Since the last inspection, the school has been re-designated as a 411 primary school, and currently has pupils from Reception to Year 5. The Early Years Foundation Stage provision consists of a Reception class. The breakfast club and the after-school club, which are managed by the governing body, were also included in this inspection. The school has achieved a number of national accreditations, including the Healthy Schools, Artsmark (Gold), and the International Schools (Foundation) awards. It is also designated as a Creative Partnership School.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

St Mary's Catholic Primary is a good school. The headteacher adopts a well-considered approach to leadership and has developed a strong team spirit amongst the staff, with good support from the acting assistant headteachers. All members of staff who completed the questionnaire agree that they are proud of the school, and most feel that their contribution is valued. This leads to the school's highly positive ethos, which is recognised and praised by parents and carers. All those who returned a questionnaire agree that their children enjoy school, and almost all are happy with their children's experience. One delighted parent wrote that, 'The school brings out the best in the children in a safe and secure setting.' Another described it as, 'A happy, friendly school. My children are receiving a great education.' A third commented that, 'Staff are always helpful and supportive. We are very fortunate to have such a lovely team of people to help our son along his educational journey.'

The headteacher's vision of an inclusive school is shared by the teaching and support staff, resulting in trusting relationships. The warm and supportive ethos is firmly established throughout the school. In the survey, all members of staff rightly judged that the school effectively meets the differing needs of individual pupils, and this is reflected in the view of most pupils. As a result of the school's strong focus on pastoral care, pupils' welfare needs are especially well met. Their behaviour is accordingly outstanding. They are highly attentive and eager to participate in lessons, are polite and feel very safe. They make an important contribution through their fund-raising activities. However, wider opportunities for them to assume leadership roles within the school, and to take greater responsibility for their own learning, are not yet well developed.

Pupils' achievement is good. Children progress well in all areas of learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Pupils maintain their good progress across the school so that the attainment of those in the current Year 5 is above that which is normally expected at this age. Their good progress results from teaching of good quality, and from an engaging curriculum. The school makes highly effective use of data to track the attainment and progress of whole-year groups, and of boys, girls and those pupils who may be vulnerable. However, teachers' use of assessment is satisfactory rather than good because target-setting is not consistent. Furthermore, target-setting does not sufficiently direct pupils towards the next steps in their learning in writing and mathematics, and teachers do not always check the extent of pupils' understanding of new learning, or of the tasks that are set for them.

The senior leadership team, the headteacher and, particularly, the members of the governing body offer strong ambition and drive to build on the school's secure climate for learning to make further improvements. The weaknesses that were identified at the last inspection have been effectively addressed, for instance in improving communication with

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parents and carers. Staffing arrangements have also been improved, with the result that parents and carers now raise very few concerns about continuity of staffing. Leaders collaborate well to evaluate outcomes and provision. There are well-developed arrangements to monitor the effectiveness of teaching through regular observations. Leaders also check the quality of pupils' work. The school's monitoring activities result in robust self-evaluation. Given these developments, the school has a good capacity to sustain improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make more consistent use of assessment across the school, so that pupils develop a better understanding of the next steps in their learning in writing and mathematics, by:
 - developing target-setting arrangements to enable teachers to indicate more precisely to pupils the improvements necessary to reach higher levels of attainment
 - making better use of techniques to gauge the extent of pupils' confidence about their learning tasks and their understanding of new learning.
- Make better use of pupils' outstanding behaviour and readiness to participate by:
 - giving them more opportunities in lessons to take greater responsibility for their own learning
 - improving their positive contributions to the school and to the community through the provision of more opportunities to take on roles of responsibility.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Both boys and girls achieve well and enjoy their time in school. Children enter the school with knowledge and skills that are broadly typical, although there are differences between intakes. By the end of Year 2, their attainment in reading, writing and mathematics has consistently been significantly above average over the last three years. In subsequent year groups, attainment remains above expectations, and pupils make good progress, with little variation between subjects. In a well-resourced lesson in mathematics, for instance, a set of pupils across Years 3 to 5 applied themselves very well and made good progress in identifying whether or not various nets could form a cube, or a pyramid with a square base. Pupils learned well, because of the lively lesson pace, clear focus on using mathematical terminology and the good match of tasks to different pupil groups. The teacher made good use of assessment to check pupils' understanding. Pupils enjoyed the challenge of predicting and the practical work of testing out their predictions. In an outstanding English lesson in Year 5, pupils made excellent progress in their learning as a result of the high degree of challenge in the work, and the teacher's adept use of questioning to extend and assess their understanding. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities also progress well, because teaching is well tailored to their needs, and assistants offer them good support.

Pupils are extremely well behaved around the school, in assembly and in the playground. They behave maturely in lessons, are highly attentive to their teachers, and cooperate well with others. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, as a result of

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the rich curriculum. Most pupils practise a healthy lifestyle, acknowledged in the national award. As well as enjoying two hours a week of physical education and games, there is good participation in a wide range of after-school physical activities. Healthy school lunches provide pupils with balanced meals. More than one third take up this option. Those who bring lunchboxes understand the importance of choosing healthy options.

Pupils make satisfactory contributions to the local community and within the school, especially through charity fund-raising. Older pupils also act as buddies to younger pupils. Nevertheless, the extent of opportunities to take on roles of responsibility is limited. Members of the school council say that they would be keen to take on more. Pupils' outstanding behaviour and readiness to learn also indicate that they are capable of playing more significant roles in their own learning, for instance by taking greater responsibility for monitoring their progress towards their academic and personal targets. Attendance is broadly average. Pupils have good speaking and listening skills, and their social skills are well developed. Together with their above average attainment in literacy and numeracy, this means that they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

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	1
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	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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

How effective is the provision?

Important factors in the good climate for learning are the strong relationships between pupils and teachers. All teachers set high expectations, and often a good pace in lessons. Clear objectives ensure that learning is purposeful. In most classes, tasks are well

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matched to the learning needs of different groups of pupils, and this provides good levels of challenge. Teaching assistants offer pupils good support, especially those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, so that they make good progress. However, during whole-class work with the teacher, the assistants do not always have a clear role to play.

Teachers' use of assessment to support learning is satisfactory. A positive feature is the good use of questioning to assess pupils' understanding. However, teachers do not consistently use other techniques to seek feedback about pupils' confidence to undertake the tasks which teachers set, or about the extent of their understanding of new learning. There are also inconsistencies in the use, and the impact, of target setting. Although medium-term targets are set, pupils are not always clear about their targets, and are not regularly assessed on their success in reaching them.

The curriculum has a strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy, and has been carefully planned to ensure a good balance between subjects. Exciting use is made of the school's grounds. Examples include the development of the potager garden as part of provision for environmental studies, and investigation of the pond in science lessons. Designation as a Creative Partnership School has involved a visiting artist, and imaginative use of the school environment as a stimulus for writing. The Artsmark (Gold) award attests to the school's good provision in these areas of the curriculum. Partnerships include a link with a secondary Sports College to extend provision in physical education and games. Teachers are in the process of planning the additional provision necessary when the school becomes a 411 primary school, but it is too early to judge the impact of this development. There is good provision for gifted and talented pupils, and high participation in the well-developed programme of extra-curricular activities.

The school is strongly committed to the care of pupils, and especially any whose circumstances leave them vulnerable. One satisfied parent described it as 'a very caring and supportive environment'. Provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well organised, and is supported by the school's good links with external agencies. The breakfast and after-school clubs serve healthy food and provide good facilities for those who attend.

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 senior team offers the school a clear sense of direction. As well as the headteacher, subject leaders are involved in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning, and have a good impact. The governing body has a good understanding of the school's many strengths and few weaknesses. The school also benefits from collaboration with its

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federated partner school, and through membership of the local cluster of Catholic primary schools. Members of the governing body ensure that the school meets statutory requirements. They play the role of 'critical friends' to good effect, and offer challenge, for example concerning achieving value for money and the school's provision for gifted and talented pupils. The positive questionnaire responses of almost all parents and carers demonstrate the school's good engagement with them. Parents and carers appreciate the school's good communication, and the approachability of the staff. The school's leadership is strongly committed to the promotion of equal opportunities and to tackling discrimination. Leaders work to ensure that this leads to good participation by pupils who may be vulnerable, and to good academic performance by both girls and boys.

The school has assessed its provision to promote community cohesion, and has developed a clear plan of action. The school itself is inclusive, and effective contributions are made at local and national levels. Even though the school has gained an international award, staff acknowledge that there is more to be done to develop cohesion at the international level, though a link with a school in China has been established. The school's systems and procedures meet all the requirements for safeguarding. Arrangements and procedures are rigorously undertaken, including good collaboration with outside agencies, where necessary. Up-to-date staff training in child protection, comprehensive risk assessments and effective policies safeguard pupils effectively.

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	2
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	2
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 make good progress, especially in their emotional and social development, and in their language and early mathematical skills. Most achieve well in all aspects of learning. They enter Year 1 with above average attainment in most areas, though their attainment in writing is closer to average. Children's relationships with adults are excellent. Their

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outstanding behaviour is evident in their politeness, capacity to take turns and eagerness to do well. Children also learn how to work more independently, and to take some responsibility for their own learning. They know about leading a healthy lifestyle; for example, they understand the need to wash their hands before fruit and snack times.

Activities are well planned, with clear and specific objectives which ensure that learning is both purposeful and enjoyable. In one successful lesson, for example, children made good progress in their observations of mini-beasts, because of the good opportunities for discussion with one another, before the teacher drew their learning together in a well-conducted final session. The teacher's very engaging tone and adept use of praise lead to the positive climate for learning. The cooperation between adults is good, and the teaching assistants support children's learning well. Learning tasks include a good match of work for children of different abilities, so that higher-attainers and those with special educational needs are challenged. The curriculum is well designed to offer interesting experiences in order to extend children's use of language and of vocabulary. Highly effective questioning extends their understanding well. Information and communication technology (ICT) provides good support for children's learning. Children are given good opportunities to initiate their own activities, which the teacher extends well. Although there are regular assessments of children's progress and learning, this information is not consistently well used to inform future planning.

The leadership and management are good. There is close liaison with pre-school settings to ensure good induction into school. Home/school links, and communication with parents and carers, are particularly good. For instance, the maths challenge books keep parents well informed about their children's work. Children's progress, including that of any who may be vulnerable, is regularly tracked. Parents and carers readily acknowledge the good provision and children's successful learning. One wrote, 'We have never had a day when my daughter has said she does not want to go to school. She is progressing really well in all areas.'

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

The rate of return of completed questionnaires was above average. Almost all parents and carers feel that the school keeps their children safe and think that it promotes a healthy lifestyle. All parents and carers also believe that the quality of teaching is good, and most think that their children are making enough progress. Almost all think that the school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour, and consider that the school is well led and managed. Inspection evidence supports these positive views.

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 84 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 171 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	56	67	28	33	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	59	70	24	29	1	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	39	46	38	45	6	7	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	41	49	39	46	2	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	46	55	38	45	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	39	46	43	51	2	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	45	54	37	44	2	2	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)	36	43	38	45	2	2	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	43	51	39	46	1	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	37	44	45	54	1	1	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	39	46	41	49	3	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	38	45	41	49	2	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	49	58	34	40	1	1	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 all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 December 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 pupils' 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.



24 June 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Ryde PO33 1LJ

We would like to thank all of you for your help during the inspection. We enjoyed seeing you in your classrooms and talking to you at breaktimes and lunchtimes. We especially thank those of you who filled in the pupils' questionnaire. Inspectors judge that you go to a good school.

These are the main things that we found out about your school.

- Your school is welcoming and sets a positive climate for your learning.
- You enjoy school, and your behaviour at school is outstanding.
- You have very good relationships with the adults who take good care of you.
- You feel very safe in school and have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles.
- You make satisfactory contributions within your school and the wider community.
- The teaching and the curriculum in your school are good.
- You participate well in the good range of extra-curricular clubs.
- Your attainment in English and mathematics is above expectations. Progress across the school is good.
- The headteacher and the other leaders are good at their jobs and know how to improve your school.
- Almost all your parents and carers are happy with your experience at school.

We have also asked your school to make some improvements.

- Help you to understand more about the next steps to improve your writing and your mathematics work, by making sure that target setting is better used to tell you what you need to do reach higher levels. Teachers will also be making sure that they check more regularly that you are clear about the tasks that they set for you, and that you understand new learning in lessons.
- Make better use of your outstanding behaviour and willingness to join in by giving you more chances to be responsible for your learning in lessons, and more chances to take on leadership roles at school and in the community.

You can help by continuing to work hard and taking advantage of the improvements that your school will be making. We wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Chris Grove

Lead inspector

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