

St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School, Oswaldtwistle

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119660
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	339496
Inspection dates	26–27 January 2010
Reporting inspector	Barbara Flitcroft

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	250
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr David Joyce
Headteacher	Mr Stephen Wells
Date of previous school inspection	9 November 2006
School address	Mayfield Avenue Oswaldtwistle Accrington BB5 3AA
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Eighty per cent of the time was spent observing learning, including visits to 16 lessons. Inspectors held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at policies, governors' minutes, pupils' progress records, school improvement planning, reports from the local authority and pupils' work. The returns from staff, pupils and 153 parent questionnaires were analysed.

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

- how the school enables all groups of pupils to make better than adequate progress
- the teaching of mathematics
- provision in Key Stage 1 and the Early Years Foundation Stage
- the accuracy of the school's judgements about its work
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers at all levels.

Information about the school

This is an average size primary school. The proportion of pupils eligible for a free school meal is well below the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is lower than the national average. A small minority of pupils join the school partway through their education. The proportion of pupils who come from minority ethnic backgrounds, and who speak English as an additional language, are both well below the national average. Provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage comprises one Reception class and one class of Reception and Year 1 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

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

The school is welcoming and inclusive and has a happy ethos. Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They make a good contribution to the school and the wider community by taking on a range of responsibilities. They have a good understanding of how to stay healthy and safe in school.

Pupils' enjoyment of their learning and their overall achievement are good. They reach standards which are broadly in line with national average and make good progress in lessons. This represents good achievement from pupils' starting points on entering school. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children make satisfactory progress. Children's access to the outdoor learning environment is available in a limited way during the mornings. However, it lacks a suitably wide range of activities to promote children's learning and development across all areas of their learning. Good care and support ensure that pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, those at an early stage of learning English and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, especially vulnerable children, make good progress.

Teaching is good overall and leads to good learning and progress. Pupils do better in English than in mathematics. In mathematics, tasks are not always sufficiently matched to pupils' needs in order to fully challenge them, especially the more able. Marking is stronger in English than in mathematics, where pupils are not always given sufficient guidance on what they need to do to improve. The curriculum provides exciting enrichment activities. The school's wealth of partnerships contributes to pupils making good progress.

Leaders, managers and governors have a realistic understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development and work effectively in partnership with many outside specialists. Self-evaluation is accurate and is used effectively to identify the correct priorities for improvement. The improved quality of teaching since the last inspection has had a positive impact on standards, especially in English. Pupils' progress is now tracked effectively and ensures the majority progress well. Attendance is now above average because the school has successfully reduced the number of persistent absentees. These positive improvements demonstrate the school has a good capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage by increasing the use of the outdoor area and providing a wider range of outdoor learning activities throughout the day.

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- Raise standards in mathematics for all groups of pupils, especially the more able by:
 - making sure the work gives the right level of challenge for different ability groups
 - improving marking so that pupils in all classes are given clear guidance as to what they need to do to improve their work.

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

Pupils achieve well and enjoy their learning, as shown by their above average attendance and good concentration when lessons interest and challenge them. Children join the school with skills below those typical of their age. Standards are broadly average by the end of Year 6. From pupils' starting points, this represents good learning and progress. The schools' tracking data and work in pupils' books show that in most year groups, the large majority of pupils are on track to reach or exceed their targets. The 2009 national test results at the end of Year 6, confirm average standards in mathematics and science. Standards in English were above average largely because the proportion of pupils achieving the higher level was above average compared to the below average proportion exceeding expected levels in mathematics. This is because more able pupils do not do sufficiently challenging work in mathematics. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are vulnerable make good progress as a result of the good support they receive.

Pupils enjoy coming to school and are confident that adults will help them quickly, should any problems occur. They have a strong awareness of how to keep themselves safe, fit and healthy. Pupils are keen to use sporting equipment, enjoy working with specialist sports coaches and like participating in games or leading games for the younger pupils at break time. Pupils enthusiastically take on responsibility within the school community, for example, as play leaders, monitors or undertaking an eco-council role. Opportunities to participate in visits and experiences, which enrich the curriculum, make learning more exciting and promote pupils' self-confidence. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school has good links with its local church and other local schools. Pupils are well prepared for future life in a diverse society. They thoroughly enjoy the work introduced through an interesting and varied curriculum. Pupils work and play together harmoniously. There have been no racist incidents since the time of the last inspection.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Lessons are successful because they are calm, supportive and well-organised and most pupils are keen to learn. Teachers present the work in interesting ways, often using the interactive whiteboards to aid their explanations, reinforce the learning and capture pupils' attention. Across the school, teachers promote speaking and listening well, pose challenging questions and use pupils' responses to monitor their understanding. Pupils commented, 'Teachers are kind and helpful and we learn a lot here.' In the best lessons, there is a brisk pace of learning with good opportunities for pupils to contribute. In less effective lessons, however, the pace slows and pupils lose concentration and become restless. This is especially the case where the information on pupils' progress is not used to provide sufficiently challenging work for their differing capabilities. In most classes, teachers mark English books thoroughly, so that pupils are clear about what they need to do to improve, but do not always provide such detailed guidance when they mark mathematics books. Teaching assistants give good support to pupils with additional needs.

The many activities to enrich the basic curriculum are exciting and wide ranging. Extra-curricular clubs and educational visits to places of interest have a good impact on raising pupils' aspirations. Pupils learn French in Years 3 to 6 and this further broadens their educational experience. Information and communication technology is used creatively to enhance the curriculum. The school has joined the local authority's support programme in the quest to improve pupils' mathematical skills.

Pupils are cared for well and given strong support. Vulnerable children are looked after particularly well. The school works effectively with a range of professionals to ensure

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that pupils' needs are successfully met. Pupils benefit from good transition arrangements when they join and leave the school.

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?

Staff and governors work well together to create a happy and cohesive school with harmonious relationships between adults and children. Good relationships between the school and the Church enhance pupils' spiritual awareness and strengthen their community involvement. Community cohesion is good. Leaders, managers and governors ensure that pupils have a good understanding, not only of their own faith and culture but of those of others in the world. Governors pay due regard to safeguarding. Safeguarding procedures are effective. Leaders and managers promote equality of opportunity well, ensuring that all pupils, whatever their background or needs, make good progress overall. They track pupils' progress carefully and use the information well to ensure that pupils receive the support they need. This especially benefits pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The school development plans are based on an accurate evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses and clearly define appropriate strategies to ensure improvement. Governors provide sound support and are ready to challenge the school and hold it to account. The school works in effective partnership with a range of outside organisations to promote pupils' learning and well-being.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2

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The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter Reception with skills which are generally lower than those expected for this age. Most children make satisfactory gains during the Reception Year in all areas of learning. At the start of Year 1, most children are working at below expected levels. Staff use many opportunities to develop children's speaking skills. They help them to understand how letters and sounds are linked and as a result, some children are beginning to understand how to sound out words. There are good opportunities for children to make choices and decisions. The youngest, most vulnerable children benefit from a separate room where staff gently nurture them into school routines. The outdoor provision has some constraints, in that outdoor learning currently takes place during mornings only. This means that children do not have free access to a wide range of learning opportunities both indoors and outdoors throughout the day. Staff are beginning to use assessment to plan for the next steps in each child's learning. Relationships are good and children are happy to approach adults. Links with parents are valued and regularly used to exchange mutually useful information. The Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactorily led and managed.

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

The overwhelming majority of parents and carers responding to the survey are happy with their children's experience of school, say their children are happy, teaching is good and judged the overall management of school to be effective. All those who responded are confident that school keeps their children safe. There were a small number of negative responses to the questionnaire but inspectors did not find evidence to support these.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School, Oswaldtwistle 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 142 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 250 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	86	61	54	38	1	1	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	89	63	53	37	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	59	42	75	53	5	4	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	67	47	70	49	2	1	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	74	52	66	46	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	61	43	71	50	8	6	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	78	55	63	44	0	0	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)	66	46	66	46	3	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	63	44	75	53	1	1	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	50	35	85	60	4	3	2	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	48	34	88	62	3	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	83	58	58	41	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	83	58	55	39	2	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 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.



28 January 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School, Oswaldtwistle, Accrington BB5 3AA

Thank you for your friendly welcome when we inspected your school recently. We really enjoyed our visit and were pleased hear about all the exciting work you have been doing and the visits you have made to help you learn.

You told us that St. Mary's is a good school and we agree. Here are some of the things that make it good.

- You like coming to school and your parents told us that they like it too.
- Your behaviour is good, you are keen to learn and you get along well with one another.
- You enjoy the interesting lessons and experiences that your teachers plan for you.
- The adults look after you very well and so you feel safe at school.
- Your teachers check regularly that you are making good progress and organise support for those who need some extra help.

To make school even better we have asked your headteacher to make sure that teachers strengthen your skills even further in mathematics and, through marking, tell you what you need to do to improve your work further. We would also like the school to make sure that the youngest children have more chances to learn outdoors throughout the day.

We send our very best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Barbara Flitcroft

Lead inspector

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