

St Marys Roman Catholic Primary School Aided

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108620
Local Authority	North Tyneside
Inspection number	356395
Inspection dates	19–20 May 2011
Reporting inspector	Kate Pringle

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	145
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Margaret Henderson
Headteacher	Mr Stephen Fallon
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Great Lime Road Forest Hall, Newcastle-upon-Tyne Tyne and Wear NE12 7AB
Telephone number	0191 2008381
Fax number	0191 2007849
Email address	stmarys.primary@northtyneside.gov.uk

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Royal Exchange Buildings
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M2 7LA

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Seven lessons and seven teachers were observed. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, members of the governing body and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at pupils' books, assessment information, policies and procedures, school development plans and updates of pupils' progress. Views of stakeholders were also considered through questionnaire responses from 58 parents and carers, seven staff and 45 pupils.

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

- How effectively leadership contributes to improvement in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- How well teaching and learning challenge the needs of pupils with differing abilities in order to secure improving progress for all groups across the school, especially in mathematics and for those of higher ability.
- How well the curriculum challenges pupils to become independent learners and provides opportunities for them to use their skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) in other subjects.
- How successfully the school works with parents and carers, and with other partners, to enable pupils to overcome barriers to learning.
- How successfully all leaders and managers have engaged in the improvement of the school since the last inspection.

Information about the school

This is a smaller than average size primary school in which the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is lower than the national average. There are few pupils from minority ethnic groups or who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is in line with national levels. At present no pupils have a statement of special educational needs. The executive headteacher took up post just a few weeks prior to the inspection, after the Easter holiday 2011.

The school holds Healthy School status and awards for Basic Skills and Investors in People.

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

Central to this warm and welcoming school, that provides pupils with a satisfactory education, are the caring relationships to support all pupils. An overwhelming majority of parents and carers appreciate the quality of school life and comments refer to the 'happy, caring and safe community'. Attendance is excellent. Pupils feel highly valued and this is reflected in the good contributions they make to the school and the wider community. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep safe and healthy through opportunities to access physical and lifestyle-related activities. They are sensitive of the feelings of others and this is reflected in their excellent behaviour.

Children enter Reception with skills broadly in line with those typical for their age and pupils leave Year 6 with broadly average attainment, although performance for boys and for pupils of higher ability is slightly weaker than other groups, especially in mathematics and writing. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make satisfactory progress, but have too few opportunities to work independently at tasks which challenge them fully. In Key Stages 1 and 2, the quality of teaching is satisfactory, enabling pupils to make satisfactory progress and achieve satisfactorily. Relationships between staff and pupils are very positive and this means that pupils are keen to please in their work. However, limitations on progress are imposed because too few teachers do not have high enough expectations for pupils. In addition, the marking and assessment of pupils' work is inconsistent and does not always focus well enough upon how successful pupils are in meeting their targets, nor does it sufficiently inform pupils about how they can improve.

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Good pastoral care and well-developed links with parents and carers support pupils' good development of personal skills. Transition to secondary schools supports pupils well although induction to the school from a variety of nurseries is less well established. The needs of those whose circumstances make them vulnerable and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are satisfactorily met enabling them to make satisfactory progress.

The headteacher is sharing his vision for improvement with staff and a governing body who are deeply committed to the school. Recent self-evaluation is accurate and most of the weaknesses identified by the last inspection have been addressed. New systems to track the progress of pupils have been introduced and teachers have developed a greater awareness of target setting. The teaching of phonics has been introduced and resources for the Early Years Foundation Stage extended to include an outdoor learning area. Other strategies, for example, to develop increased responsibilities for leaders and managers are demonstrating early signs of success although not all leaders and managers have sufficient opportunity to develop their skills of monitoring and evaluating the school's work. Overall the school's capacity for sustained improvement is satisfactory.

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Up to 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.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of assessment and teaching in order to raise attainment in mathematics and writing, especially for boys and those of higher ability, by:
 - - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve, where these are not high enough
 - - ensuring good pace to lessons and reducing the amount of teacher direction to give pupils more time to carry out practical and investigative tasks independently or in small groups
 - - extending opportunities for pupils to use their skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology across the curriculum
 - - ensuring consistency in the quality of assessment, marking and feedback to demonstrate pupils' successes against their targets and what they need to do to improve.
- Secure the progress children make in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - - providing more opportunities for children to work independently with greater challenge
 - - using observations of children working on activities they have chosen for themselves in order to form judgements about how well they are learning.
- Strengthen the roles of leaders and managers so that they use their delegated responsibilities to sharpen their monitoring and evaluation of all aspects of the school's work.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils enjoy school and speak well of the opportunities it offers them: their achievement is satisfactory. They engage positively in the tasks set by their teachers, especially those which provide practical and investigative activities. In these lessons, where they solve problems and are creative, pupils engage well and make good progress. In other lessons, progress is slower. Pupils have a developing understanding of their individual targets but do not focus upon these sufficiently in daily learning in order to become more aware of their progress and more involved in evaluating it. Attainment is broadly average in Key Stages 1 and 2. Current evidence indicates slightly weaker performance of boys in both key stages and for those of higher ability, particularly in mathematics and in writing. The needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are appropriately met and as a result they make satisfactory progress.

Pupils' confidence reflects the school's successful emphasis on promoting their personal development. They value, respect and care for each other and are active in supporting those in need of help. Pupils feel very safe and speak confidently about how their concerns are quickly and successfully dealt with by staff. Pupils make good use of opportunities for physical activity and understand how to engage in a healthy lifestyle through sensible diet. They are very active in their work about school as school councillors

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and eco warriors' and they engage well with the local community, especially through the arts, and in sports. Together with their satisfactory understanding of basic skills, this means that pupils are adequately prepared for their next steps in learning. Pupils have a growing understanding of those from other cultures and backgrounds. Their well-developed sense of responsibility and their growing independence enables them to demonstrate a real sense of citizenship by the time they leave Year 6.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

The positive ethos of the school and the good relationships pupils have with their teachers promotes their engagement in all aspects of school life. They are eager to learn and are well motivated, working hard to achieve the tasks set by their teachers. The quality of teaching and learning across the school is satisfactory but variable. In better lessons, there is good pace and teachers have raised expectations of pupils, providing them with activities which demonstrate a good awareness of individual pupils' needs. Time is provided for pupils to consider, practise and consolidate their learning and activities promote independent thinking through developing problem-solving skills. In such lessons, progress is good. In less effective lessons, teachers tend to dominate learning with their lengthy explanations and the pace of learning is slower with limited opportunity for independent or group work. There are fewer practical activities for pupils to engage with and be challenged at their individual levels. Teachers know the levels at which pupils are

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performing through regular assessment of their learning. However, information about the levels at which pupils are achieving is not used effectively enough to provide activities that challenge the abilities of individual pupils. This limits progress and ultimate attainment.

The broad curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to develop their skills. New approaches to cross-curricular learning and enhancement of pupils' understanding of the links between subjects are at an early stage of development. Opportunities to use literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology are increasing but are not yet sufficiently implemented to give pupils good opportunities to use these across the curriculum. In some classes there is occasionally an over-dependency on worksheets which restrict pupils' opportunities to be creative in their learning. A good range of enrichment activities enables pupils to extend their skills in sport and other interests, such as gardening and chess. Additional experiences of visits, visitors to school and the Year 6 residential help to extend their interests, skills and knowledge.

There is an inclusive feel to this school. Staff know pupils well and this enables them to provide appropriate care and sensitive pastoral support when pupils are troubled or concerned. Links with outside agencies and in-school provision provide guidance for pupils and their families, especially for those whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable or who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Links with secondary schools are embedded ensuring that pupils leave Year 6 confidently for their next stage in education. Strategies for managing behaviour and attendance are particularly effective and result in excellent outcomes in both areas.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	4
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher has a very clear educational vision which includes a commitment to promote whole-school decision making. Past training has raised awareness of leaders' roles and leaders understand the need for improvement and the raising of standards. Not all leaders have the same opportunities to monitor and evaluate their areas of responsibilities sufficiently well to identify and implement actions to improve provision and outcomes for all groups of pupils.

The governing body provides satisfactory support for the school and ensures that safeguarding procedures meet statutory requirements. There is satisfactory promotion of equal opportunities. The school can demonstrate improvement where there has been concerted action, for example, in raising attainment in writing, but there are still areas to address to assure good progress for all groups. Communication with parents and carers is good and opportunities to provide better information on their children's daily learning are

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improving. Partnership links with other agencies support vulnerable pupils and are embedded and contribute to pupils' overall satisfactory outcomes. The school itself presents as a fully cohesive community and there is a growing awareness of the need to develop sustainable links with cultures and communities outside of the local area.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Most children enter the Reception class with the skills expected for their age. They develop good relationships with each other and with their teachers which help them to feel confident and secure. Children work happily within the setting. They interact well as they share and take turns, demonstrating positive attitudes and behaviour. By the time they enter Year 1, children's attainment is broadly average. Where particular areas of learning have been targeted for action, for example in letters and sounds and in writing, there has been good progress and evidence of higher attainment.

Children enjoy coming to school. This view is supported by parents and carers who appreciate the care and attention given to their offspring. Adult-led opportunities often provide opportunities for children to make good progress. Overall progress is satisfactory because there are too few opportunities for them to work and play independently through activities which provide a clear degree of challenge. The information about children's day-to-day development does not draw sufficiently upon observations of what children learn when they are working on activities they have chosen for themselves. Information is not yet used to sufficient effect in planning tasks which precisely match individual needs. A new outside area has been developed but is not yet fully utilised for children to access at will. This limits their choice of where and how they choose to learn. Satisfactory leadership ensures that statutory requirements are met and policies and procedures support

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children's welfare appropriately. Self-evaluation accurately identifies areas of need and has resulted in improvements, for example, to the teaching of letters and sounds and writing.

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 vast majority of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire were highly positive about the school. They greatly appreciate the care given to their children and are extremely confident that their children are happy and safe and that teachers meet their children's needs well. Few issues were raised by parents and carers and there was no obvious pattern to these. All were fully investigated and form part of the evidence base used to arrive at the inspection judgements.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Marys Roman Catholic Primary School Aided 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 58 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 145 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	42	72	15	26	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	35	60	21	36	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	25	43	28	48	2	3	2	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	27	47	27	47	1	2	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	28	48	25	43	0	0	1	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	25	43	28	48	2	3	2	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	32	55	24	41	0	0	1	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)	22	38	25	43	0	0	2	3
The school meets my child's particular needs	28	48	26	45	2	3	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	24	41	29	50	2	3	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	18	31	30	52	2	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	21	36	33	57	2	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	34	59	21	36	1	2	1	2

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.



23 May 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School Aided, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, NE12 7AB

Thank you for the lovely welcome you gave inspectors when we visited your school recently. We were extremely impressed with how well you work and play together. Your behaviour is excellent and this helps you to feel very safe in school. We were particularly impressed with how much you care for and respect each other. You clearly enjoy school because your attendance is high and we know that you take every opportunity to work hard because you want to please your teachers with whom you enjoy good relationships. We know that you appreciate the visits you make, the work you do with different people who visit school and the many after-school activities that are provided for you.

You school gives you a satisfactory standard of education. It has some strengths, but there are some things we would like to see improved. We want you to achieve higher levels in your assessments by the time you leave school, particularly in mathematics and writing, and especially boys and those of you who find learning easier. You should be encouraged more to use your targets and marking to help you understand what you have achieved and what more you could, particularly in writing and in mathematics. We feel that some of your lessons could be more exciting and challenging. We want you to be given better opportunities to be creative and use your practical skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT in different subjects. We have recommended that children in the Early Years Foundation Stage be given more choice as they explore and learn and that staff watch carefully and record their developing skills. Finally, we want all leaders and managers to become more involved with the improvement of the school.

We know that you will do everything you can to help your teachers and wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Kate Pringle

Lead inspector

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