

St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School, Richmond

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121655
Local Authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	339989
Inspection dates	8–9 February 2010
Reporting inspector	Georgiana Sale

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	168
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Christopher Lees
Headteacher	Miss Janet Arber
Date of previous school inspection	28 November 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 16 lessons and saw all staff teach. They held meetings with governors, staff, and groups of pupils and talked with some parents and carers. They observed the school's work, and looked at documentation including records of pupils' progress, the school improvement plan, assessment information, policies and samples of pupils' work. Information about safeguarding was also evaluated. Inspectors also took into account the views of staff and pupils expressed in questionnaires and analysed 59 questionnaires from parents and carers.

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

- the effectiveness of leadership across the school and how it is driving improvement
- the standards of attainment and the rates of progress of all groups of pupils throughout the school
- the monitoring of the performance of all pupils and whether action is taken if there is any underachievement.

Information about the school

St. Mary's is an average-sized Catholic primary school. A larger than average number of pupils join or leave the school at other than the usual times as a result of local employment patterns. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. There is a Reception class for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Most children enter this class with some pre-school experience. There has been instability in the staffing at senior level in the school over the past few years, with no substantive headteacher and two acting headteachers. An advisory headteacher has also worked with the school. A new headteacher is due to take up post in April 2010.

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?

4

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

4

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing considerably less well than in all circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a notice to improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to establishing effective and sustainable leadership and management.

The overall effectiveness of the school is inadequate. The lack of consistent senior leadership means that the school lacks direction. There has been some decline in pupils' achievement since the last inspection, although the provision made for them and their academic and personal outcomes remain at a satisfactory level. The school is therefore providing a satisfactory standard of education. Nevertheless, the school has not moved forward since the last inspection and is not demonstrating the capacity to do so. This is because the leaders that are in post do not have the knowledge or experience to lead the school effectively and roles and responsibilities are not clearly defined. This situation exists in spite of a dedicated and able governing body which has worked very hard to tackle the staffing problems. Governors have worked with the acting headteachers and the advisory headteacher to identify accurately the strengths of and key issues for the school. This has helped to stop a further decrease in attainment and to maintain the good levels of care for pupils.

Pupils start Key Stage 1 with skills that are in line with those expected for their age. They make satisfactory progress and their attainment is broadly average at the end of Year 6. While achievement is satisfactory overall, it is not fully consistent for all groups and in all subjects. The quality of teaching and the curriculum are both satisfactory. Recent attention has been given to the use of assessment information to check on how well pupils are doing, to set ambitious targets, to make sure their needs are met in lessons and to intervene where pupils are falling behind. However, this work is at an early stage of development and is not yet having a consistent effect. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress and receive a good education. The school is a safe and welcoming place where relationships are warm and friendly and good care and support is provided for pupils. Pupils behaviour is good and they say they feel safe.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Embed ambition and raise expectations to drive improvement by:
 - establishing a clear vision and a sense of direction for the school

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- using accurate data to set ambitious targets for all pupils
- using data to inform planning, monitor progress and then take quick and effective action where there is underachievement.
- Develop leadership at all levels to provide the capacity for sustained improvement by:
 - having clearly defined roles and responsibilities for all leaders
 - using clear criteria to measure the impact of leadership on pupils' outcomes
 - having clear and robust lines of accountability.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils
3

Pupils attainment in English and mathematics is broadly average. They make satisfactory progress in lessons because there are varied tasks which they enjoy. They are able to work collaboratively and to learn from each other. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress.

Pupils say that they are happy and enjoy school. They behave well in and out of class and are kind and considerate with each other. The values they are taught are brought to life in the way in which pupils treat each other and they have a strong sense of right and wrong. All pupils learn about healthy living, but not all eat healthily and there are limited opportunities for them to enjoy out-of-school physical exercise. Pupils feel that their voice is heard and is acted upon; for example pupils have redesigned their uniform and have chosen playground equipment. Although they play a part in some aspects of the life in the community, the opportunities that pupils have to take a wider role are limited. Attendance is satisfactory.

Pupils develop many social skills, such as working well in teams and enjoying learning, which will enable them to make effective use of opportunities in their future life.

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

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' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is satisfactory. Clear objectives are identified for lessons and the teachers' relationships with pupils are good. Teachers focus on developing pupils' basic and inter-personal skills, enabling all to make satisfactory progress. Where teaching is most effective, teachers use the information they have about pupils' abilities to plan lessons which closely match their needs. In the better lessons teachers also use their skills well to ask probing questions to challenge and extend pupils' thinking further. However, the ways in which pupils' individual targets are set and feedback is given are not specific enough or consistent enough across all subject areas, to make sure that all pupils know exactly how well they are doing or what to do to improve.

The curriculum is satisfactory and is enhanced by the opportunities in Year 6 to use facilities at the local secondary school for information and communication technology (ICT). Lower down the school there is a lack of planned use of ICT. Insufficient opportunities are created to enrich the curriculum so that pupils understand and appreciate other cultures, customs and artistic traditions both outside and within the United Kingdom.

The care, guidance and support offered to pupils are good. Pupils feel valued and supported by staff and this contributes positively to their well-being and the progress they make. The school has a 'nurture room' where the more vulnerable pupils are cared for well. These pupils participate in work that caters for their specific needs and this has contributed to significant improvements in behaviour. The school has well-organised processes in place to work with other agencies to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and classroom assistants give good support to these pupils in class.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

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The effectiveness of care, guidance and support

2

How effective are leadership and management?

The leadership of the teaching and learning in the school is inadequate as a result of the long-term gaps in senior staffing positions. Self-evaluation has not been accurate. Judgements made about the quality of teaching and learning, as well as teachers' assessments of pupils' attainment, are too generous. There have been some steps taken to try and secure the school's improvement. However, these have not proved sufficiently effective, owing to middle and senior leaders' lack of knowledge or experience in planning, carrying out and evaluating the necessary changes.

The governing body has been proactive in helping to compensate for the gaps in leadership. The governing body has re-established a sharper focus on pupils' achievement which is understood and shared. As a result, and having had help from the local authority and acting headteachers, the school's self-evaluation is now more accurate. Governors show a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement but are not in a position to lead teaching and learning in the school.

Recently appointed leaders in literacy and numeracy are responding to the new challenges and are committed to raising standards. However, their checks on the effectiveness of teaching and learning are not sufficiently rigorous to ensure that teaching is consistently good. As a result, some pupils are not achieving as well as others. Recent steps have also been taken to improve the accuracy, quality and analysis of information on pupils' progress and to identify the necessary related actions to improve achievement. However, this is not yet having the full impact required.

Most parents and carers support the school and feel it offers a safe and caring place for their children. Safeguarding procedures are good and meet all statutory requirements. The school promotes good relationships in all parts of its own community and has taken action to make sure that all groups of pupils are included in the learning community of the school and are making satisfactory progress. This gives the school satisfactory effectiveness in promoting equality and in tackling discrimination. However, pupils have a limited understanding of cultural and ethnic diversity in the United Kingdom and so community cohesion is satisfactory.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	4
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	4
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	3

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

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Leaders, supported by the acting headteacher and an external consultant, have ensured that the care and teaching and learning in this area are good. The children are happy and enjoy their education, being well cared for and supported by the teacher and the classroom assistant. Adults have a good understanding of the needs of children and work well together to meet them. Comprehensive recording of the progress of children, supported by external consultants, provides a detailed profile of their achievements and needs. The information is then used to plan work to help improve their learning further. Children have a varied curriculum that allows them to develop in all of the areas of learning, with activities which are well planned and focused. The school provides good and secure facilities for children to experience outdoor learning and play. Children are well behaved and relationships are good, with children showing great care and consideration for each other's opinions and work. They are able to explain clearly their work and their reasons for completing tasks. When studying 'Space and aliens' they could explain their work, using drawing and modelling to share their thoughts. Newly implemented assessment procedures indicate that children are now making good progress. Good links with parents and carers ensure that transition into the school is smooth and parents and carers are able to come into school and be updated every Friday on the progress of their children.

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	3

Views of parents and carers

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

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The very large majority of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire said that they felt the school kept their children safe and their children enjoyed school. The large majority thought that the teaching was good and the school catered for their children's needs. However, the majority of parents and carers who responded had concerns about the leadership and management of the school and a minority thought that their children were not making enough progress. Inspectors agree that there are weaknesses in the school's leadership and management, but found that pupils' progress is satisfactory.

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, Richmond 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 59 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 168 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	24	41	24	41	9	15	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	25	42	27	46	5	8	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	11	19	25	42	18	31	4	7
My child is making enough progress at this school	12	20	22	37	19	32	4	7
The teaching is good at this school	13	22	28	47	14	24	1	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	9	15	30	51	17	29	1	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	17	29	32	54	6	10	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)	14	24	31	53	11	19	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	15	25	26	44	12	20	2	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	12	20	26	44	11	19	7	12
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	9	15	27	46	16	27	3	5
The school is led and managed effectively	10	17	18	31	17	29	12	20
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	17	29	23	39	13	22	4	7

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

	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:	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. ■ 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.



10 February 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School, Richmond, DL10 7DZ

We really enjoyed visiting your school. Your thoughts and views helped us to make our judgements about the school.

We judged that:

- you are making satisfactory progress and most of you work hard in lessons
- your behaviour is good and you are kind to each other and play together very happily
- you enjoy your lessons and the tasks you are asked to do
- you are well cared for and supported by all the adults in the school.

We also found that your school has some important weaknesses and so have given it a notice to improve. This means that inspectors will visit in a few months' time to check its progress in making improvements. We have asked your school to look at how to make things better. The most important things that need to happen are:

- making sure that your school expects the best from you all and carefully checks your learning and progress to set you challenging targets
- planning the right work for each of you and helping anyone who is falling behind
- making sure that teachers in charge of subjects are clear about what they have to do so that you make good progress in every subject.

You can help by attending school every day, working hard and always trying your best. When your new headteacher arrives, I hope you will do all you can to help her improve the school.

I wish you every success in your time at school.

Yours sincerely

Georgiana Sale

Lead inspector

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