

# St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Knaresborough

## Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 121637          |
| <b>Local authority</b>         | North Yorkshire |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 380290          |
| <b>Inspection dates</b>        | 7–8 March 2012  |
| <b>Lead inspector</b>          | Brenda Clarke   |

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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|--|---|
| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Primary                                     |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Voluntary aided                             |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 5–11  |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed                                       |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 204   |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body                          |
| <b>Chair</b>                               | Angela Wicken                               |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Chris Wray                                  |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>  | 11 November 2008                            |
| <b>School address</b>                      | Tentergate Road<br>Knaresborough<br>HG5 9BG |
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## Introduction

### Inspection team

Brenda Clarke  
Peter Bannon

Additional inspector  
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with three days' notice. The inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. The inspectors observed seven teachers teaching 12 lessons or part lessons, of which two were joint observations with the headteacher. In addition, the inspectors made visits to two classes to hear pupils read. Meetings were held with three groups of pupils, members of the governing body and school staff, including senior and middle managers. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the tracking of pupils' progress over time, the school development plan and safeguarding procedures and policies. The inspectors analysed 118 parental and carers' questionnaires as well as those completed by staff and pupils.

## Information about the school

The school is average in size compared to schools of similar type. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds with a small minority of Gypsy/Roma heritage. The proportion of disabled pupils, pupils with special educational needs or a statement of special educational needs is slightly below average. The school meets the current floor standard.

There have been considerable staffing changes since the last inspection, including a new deputy headteacher, and a significant number of the governing body are new to their roles.

**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

|                                       |          |
|---------------------------------------|----------|
| <b>Overall Effectiveness</b>          | <b>2</b> |
| <b>Achievement of pupils</b>          | <b>2</b> |
| <b>Quality of teaching</b>            | <b>2</b> |
| <b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b> | <b>2</b> |
| <b>Leadership and management</b>      | <b>2</b> |

## Key Findings

- This is a good school. It is not outstanding because teaching is no better than good and promotes good, rather than exceptional, progress. The school has maintained overall above average standards and good rates of progress for Key Stage 2 pupils since the last inspection. Throughout the school, pupils' attainment in reading is high. Progress in writing is at least satisfactory but not always fast enough for the more able.
- Over the last two years, children's achievement has declined in the Early Years Foundation Stage due to staffing turbulence. This decline has been successfully halted and children now make good progress.
- Teaching is good overall and contributes significantly to pupils' good progress. Most lessons observed were judged to be good. In a minority of satisfactory lessons teachers did not use assessments effectively to plan work that closely matched pupils' differing abilities. The school provides very effective individual support in lessons and small group interventions for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, enabling them to make good progress.
- Almost all pupils behave well and are very proud of their school. Pupils show high levels of engagement, courtesy, and cooperation in and out of lessons. Almost all feel safe in school and say that bullying is rare. Pupils understand very clearly what constitutes an unsafe situation and are highly aware of how to keep themselves and others safe.
- The headteacher and staff show keen ambition for the school. Along with the governing body they know the school's strengths and weaknesses well. Teaching and performance are well managed. Leaders and staff use professional development opportunities effectively to improve the quality of teaching and the effectiveness of the good curriculum. Most parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire expressed confidence in the school. A significant minority wrote about a lack of communication concerning their children's progress and timely information when events are changed or cancelled.

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

- Develop the consistency of teaching to match that of the best by:
  - using assessment information more effectively to plan work that closely matches pupils' differing academic needs
  - further involving pupils in the assessment of their learning and routinely informing them of the progress they are making
  - ensuring that teachers' marking is sufficiently detailed to inform pupils of how to improve further
  - providing stimulating opportunities for pupils to write at length and for a variety of purposes.
  
- Develop more effective systems of communication with parents and carers by:
  - providing regular opportunities for parents and carers to see the school in action
  - ensuring that parents and carers receive regular updates about their children's progress.

## Main Report

### Achievement of pupils

Most children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills expected for their age. Over the last two years children have made satisfactory rather than good progress because there has been discontinuity in their learning due to staff absence and weaknesses in teaching. The current class of Year 1 pupils left the Reception class with broadly average skills overall, but were below expectations in their early social and emotional development and early reading and writing. Children in the current Reception class are making good progress in these aspects due to the very effective teaching of letter sounds and excellent behaviour management skills of the class teacher. Their speaking and listening skills are outstanding.

Across Key Stage 1, the vast majority of pupils make good progress. Skilful teaching, well-trained teaching assistants and the provision of small group interventions are effectively addressing gaps in children's learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage, and pupils are now back on track and achieving well. Attainment in Year 2 in reading is above average, broadly average in mathematics but rising year on year, and average in writing. Good teaching ensures that these levels of attainment are built upon in Key Stage 2 so that by the end of Year 6 attainment is above average overall. It is well above average in reading and above in mathematics. Attainment in writing overall is not as strong and fewer pupils attain the higher levels in national tests. Boys particularly enjoy factual writing, for example, reports and note-taking, but experience difficulty when writing creative stories.

Pupils' enjoy their learning and achieve well overall. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make similar progress to their peers because they receive very effective individual support in lessons and small group interventions. In lessons learning is good. Pupils' above average speaking skills enable them to answer questions confidently and to explain their answers clearly. They work diligently, concentrate and persevere for good periods of time. The daily personalised learning sessions contribute significantly to pupils' good achievement enabling them to work independently and develop good research skills.

Pupils develop good basic skills and high levels of initiative. For example, Year 4 pupils applied their numeracy skills very effectively when calculating the area of irregular shapes. The large majority of parents and carers consider their children are making good progress and inspection findings support their views.

## Quality of teaching

Parents and carers consider that their children are supported well and are taught effectively and this matches inspection findings. In the Early Years Foundation Stage teaching is good. Staff are extremely good role models and ensure excellent relationships at all levels. This promotes confidence, very good attitudes and an enthusiasm for learning amongst children. The good mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities gives children choice and promotes high levels of independence. There is a wealth of interesting activities that engage children and make learning fun. Opportunities are sometimes missed to reinforce early writing, reading and number skills when children are working independently.

Teaching is predominantly good across the school; it makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. In most lessons, behaviour management skills are very strong so that lessons are orderly and pupils listen attentively to their teacher and others. Brisk starters to lessons effectively set the scene and grab pupils' attention, as when Year 1 children sang about a farmer and his sheep when adding numbers together. Teachers plan a relevant, challenging curriculum and activities that engage pupils and enable them to practise a range of skills in context. Well-trained teaching assistants are used effectively to support groups and individuals, enabling them to make good progress in lessons. Teachers use the daily personalised-learning sessions very effectively to provide focused activities aimed at specific learning needs. For example, four Year 6 girls receive small group provision to develop their confidence in mathematics. Because pupils often follow their individual interests or academic needs at this time, they are extremely motivated and work with great enthusiasm. Teachers ensure good attention to basic skills and frequently promote the use of class computers. Hence most pupils develop good information and communication technology skills and use these effectively to reinforce learning.

A skilfully delivered programme of teaching letters and sounds promotes a love of reading in most pupils. However, inspection evidence indicates that teachers often plan too little time for pupils to complete written work, and that there are limited opportunities for pupils to write for different purposes, in different styles. Where lessons were judged satisfactory, assessment information was not used effectively to closely match tasks to pupils' abilities. Teachers diligently mark pupils' work but not all teachers consistently involve pupils in the assessment of their own learning, nor do they inform pupils of how well they are doing and what to do next to improve further. Hence, 26% of pupils' questionnaires indicate that they are unsure of how well they are doing. This, together with limited communication with parents and carers about pupils' progress, goes some way to explaining why parents and carers also raised negative comments about this issue.

## Behaviour and safety of pupils

Almost all parents and carers who returned the inspection questionnaire agree that behaviour is good and that their children are kept safe at school. Behaviour was judged as at least good in almost all lessons observed during the inspection and pupils confirm that behaviour is usually good in and out of lessons. Pupils say they feel safe in school and that they can approach any adult if they have concerns. They report an absence of bullying, but

say there is some name calling at playtime which sometimes goes unchallenged. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe and have a good understanding about internet safety. The school environment is friendly and supportive. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning that support their good progress. They are confident to ask for help and readily admit when they have not completely understood part of a lesson. Parents and carers of disabled pupils and those pupils with special educational needs are especially fulsome in their praise of how well their children are nurtured. Pupils take good care of each other, as when older buddies befriend younger children at lunchtime. Pupils particularly appreciate the recently introduced Golden Time and strive to work hard and behave well to take part in this initiative. Attendance is above average and most pupils arrive on time. Exclusions are rare.

## Leadership and management

The headteacher is well regarded by parents and carers, staff, members of the governing body and pupils alike. Together with the deputy headteacher she has developed a collegiate approach to implementing new initiatives so that staff work as a cohesive team and morale is high. Rigorous systems for monitoring pupils' attainment and progress together with carefully targeted plans to tackle weaknesses are speeding up the pace of pupils' progress and raising standards. For example, teaching assistants have been trained to develop the letters and sounds programme and make a significant contribution to pupils' achievement in this area. The many changes in staffing have been handled effectively. This has been successful and most pupils are on track to meet or exceed their end of year targets. Monitoring of teaching and learning is rigorous, highlighting strengths and leading to actions to enhance teachers' performance where development is required. However, some monitoring, whilst focusing on teachers' skills pays insufficient attention to the rate and quality of pupils' learning in the lesson. Nevertheless, these actions demonstrate that the school has a good capacity for sustained improvement.

The inclusion of all pupils is central to the school's provision. Good arrangements to promote equal opportunities ensure that there is no discrimination and that pupils reach their potential. For example, Gypsy/Roma pupils achieve well and above national comparatives. The good curriculum is broad, balanced and is planned to capture pupils' interests. This was demonstrated in a topic about Knaresborough Castle that proved particularly interesting to boys and enticed them to write in greater detail. Provision is enriched by effective partnerships, a good range of clubs and visits to exciting places that extend pupils' learning. All of these aspects of curricular provision promote pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Pupils play an active part in the local community, for example, planning flower beds for the Knaresborough in Bloom competition. Active links with pupils in Ghana promote good understanding of cultural diversity in other countries, but pupils' understanding of this aspect in multi-ethnic Britain is only satisfactory.

Links with parents and carers are satisfactory. Opportunities for parents and carers to see the school in action are not regular enough. Many wrote to say they would like more regular updates on their children's progress. A significant minority wrote about their dissatisfaction when events are cancelled at short notice, often as a result of late notification by outside providers and partners.

The governing body bring a variety of skills that complement provision. Members are developing a rigorous approach to monitoring and evaluation of provision and are holding the school to account. All safeguarding procedures are securely in place and rigorously applied.

## 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  | 46   | 8            | 0          |
| Primary schools      | 8   | 47   | 40           | 5          |
| Secondary schools    | 14  | 38   | 40           | 8          |
| Special schools      | 28  | 48   | 20           | 4          |
| Pupil referral units | 15  | 50   | 29           | 5          |
| All schools          | 11  | 46   | 38           | 6          |

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

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

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## Common terminology used by inspectors

|                            |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| Achievement:               | the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.   |
| Attainment:                | the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.  |
| Behaviour                  | how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.   |
| Capacity to improve:       | the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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.  |
| 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. |
| Safety                     | how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.             |

**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.**



9 March 2012

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Knaresborough, HG5 9BG**

I would like to thank you for the very warm welcome you gave the inspectors on our recent visit to your school. We enjoyed talking with you and listening to your views. We were pleased to share your photographs and to learn about your friends in Ghana. This letter tells you what we found out.

Yours is a good school and I understand why you enjoy it so much. Your behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. Well done! Teaching is good so that you enjoy your lessons and achieve well. Your school takes good care of you and you feel safe. You show care and consideration for others and are very polite. Your headteacher leads your school well and you continue to improve. Your attendance is good.

I have asked the headteacher, other staff and the governing body to do two important things to make your school even better for you.

- Make sure that you are taught consistently well and that you always know how well you are doing in lessons.
- Make sure that your parents and carers know quickly when events have been changed or cancelled and that they regularly receive information about your progress.

I send you my best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Brenda Clarke  
Lead inspector

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