

# St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School, Sabden

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	119651
<b>Local Authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	358597
<b>Inspection dates</b>	19–20 May 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Declan McCarthy

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>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	61
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Mike Firth
<b>Headteacher</b>	Miss Claire Halstead
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	11 December 2007
<b>School address</b>	Watt Street Sabden, Clitheroe Lancashire BB7 9ED
<b>Telephone number</b>	01282 771 009
<b>Fax number</b>	01282 680 095
<b>Email address</b>	head@st-marys-sabden.lancs.sch.uk

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors observed six lessons, taught by three teachers. They met informally with a small group of parents and carers and held meetings with staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at pupils' books, the systems for tracking pupils' progress, safeguarding documentation, the school development plan and curriculum documentation. Inspectors analysed questionnaire responses from staff, pupils and 39 parents and carers.

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

- The achievement of the more able pupils at Key Stage 2 in order to determine how well assessment information is used to extend their learning.
- Whether teaching is sufficiently challenging and the impact of booster classes in raising achievement, particularly in mathematics at Key Stage 2.
- The impact of links with parents and carers and partnerships with other providers on pupils' learning.
- How the school's monitoring of teaching impacts on raising achievement in mathematics.

## Information about the school

St Mary's is smaller than average for a primary school. The school has a strong religious character based on Catholic Christian principles, with close links with the local parish. All pupils are of White British heritage and all speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is low and the proportion of those identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is above average. Pupils are grouped in three mixed-aged classes. An above-average proportion of pupils enter the school other than at the usual time of admission. The school has Healthy School status and the Activemark silver award.

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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

This is a good school which meets the individual needs of its pupils well. The parents and carers who returned their questionnaires expressed a high level of satisfaction with the school's work. One captured this saying, 'The school community is wonderful and led so well by the headteacher.' Another parent said, 'Children of all abilities thrive in the school, glowing in confidence as their individual abilities are recognised.' The strong sense of community amongst pupils, parents and carers and staff is a reflection of the caring and welcoming Christian ethos of the school.

Under the strong leadership of the headteacher, all pupils, including those identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the more able pupils, are making good progress. Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and knowledge that are slightly below national expectations, particularly in communication, language and literacy and make good progress by the time they enter Year 1. Attainment across the school is broadly average and is steadily rising, particularly in mathematics, where a higher proportion of the more able pupils in Year 6 are expected to reach the higher levels in their national tests. Good teaching and good use of assessment to match work to pupils' abilities and to set clear learning objectives enables all pupils to learn and make good progress. Marking is satisfactory, although on some occasions, it does not show pupils how to improve their work, and pupils in Year 6 do not know what levels they are working on or how to achieve the next level. Information about pupils' prior attainment is used well to provide additional support, in booster classes, for those who are not quite reaching the expected levels of attainment. Pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is considerably enhanced through the strong links with the parish community and strong Christian values. Good care guidance and support ensures that pupils stay safe, although the school's documentation to promote safeguarding is not always maintained in such a way that reflects the recommended good practice.

Although members of the governing body are supportive of the school and ensure that all legal requirements are met, they are not monitoring the effectiveness of school documentation to promote safeguarding of rigorously enough. Self-evaluation is accurate. Good leadership and direction is based on regular monitoring of teaching and learning to bring about improvements. This has led to better quality teaching and accurate assessment systems to track individual pupils' progress. Since the last inspection, it has also resulted in improved provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage, which has moved from satisfactory to good. The school has good capacity to improve further.

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

- Raise pupils' achievement by:

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- providing consistent guidance in marking to show pupils how they can improve their work
- informing pupils in Year 6 about the levels at which they are working and showing them how to reach the next level.
- Ensure that the documentation to promote safeguarding reflects best practice and that the governing body monitors the effectiveness of this on a termly basis.

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

Achievement is good and pupils enjoy their learning. By the end of Year 2, pupils are reaching broadly average attainment in reading, writing and mathematics. National test results over the past few years have shown that by Year 6, attainment has been broadly average in reading and writing but low in mathematics, because a very small number of the few more-able pupils were not reaching the higher levels. However, care must be taken when interpreting these results, as the group sizes are small. For example, in 2010, nearly all pupils reached their expected levels but one pupil failed to reach the higher level in mathematics, which affected the overall attainment figures. Attainment in writing has improved in recent years because there has been a sharp focus in engaging boys in writing. There is a strong partnership with the local secondary school. Year 7 pupils' visits to St Mary's to work with the boys have had a significant impact on raising achievement in writing throughout the school. The detailed and accurate recording of individual pupils' progress shows attainment is rising, with an increasing proportion of pupils on track to reach the higher levels in mathematics. Attainment is rising because expectations for learning are high and work is more closely matched to pupils' abilities. In lessons, all pupils remained focused on their learning, tried hard and acquired new knowledge and skills quickly. For example, in a mathematics lesson, older pupils were successfully solving money problems using a variety of steps. A significant proportion of pupils were working within the higher levels, for example, in calculating how much a customer would pay a garage for servicing a car after spending four hours on the service at £30 per hour and including the cost of parts, plus VAT. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make equally good progress in their learning because teaching assistants provide good support in breaking tasks down into smaller steps, by explaining the meaning of subject-specific vocabulary and in challenging them to improve their learning.

Pupils say that they enjoy learning and all the school offers and this is reflected in their above-average attendance and their high levels of participation in after-school activities. Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay healthy, as seen in their vigorous exercise at play times and in the healthy choices they make at lunch times. They make a good contribution to the local and parish community. For example, they participate in the school Mass at the local parish church each Friday morning. This has led to a rise in attendance from the parishioners who enjoy hearing the pupils sing and listen to them confidently recite the bidding prayers that they compose in school. They also raise funds national and global charities, developing a deep understanding and appreciation of diversity. Pupils show initiative and responsibility around the school as classroom helpers and the active school council has made a good contribution in suggesting ways of improving school facilities. Pupils say they feel very safe in school and can always talk to someone if they have a problem. Their good behaviour contributes positively to their learning and they show considerable kindness and respect for others. Pupils' broadly

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average attainment in English and mathematics prepares them appropriately for the next stage of their education.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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

<sup>1</sup> 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?

Lessons proceed at a brisk and lively pace with a good variety of activities and resources, including the interactive whiteboard and laptop computers, to stimulate learning. As a result, pupils are enthusiastic learners and participate fully in the challenging tasks teachers provide for them. Teachers take every opportunity to extend pupils' writing skills and there is a sharp focus on the development of understanding of mathematical language, through practical use of everyday mathematics. For example, in Years 1 and 2, pupils measured the lengths of the goal posts, the raised flower bed, and various playground equipment, using metre rules and a trundle wheel. They were encouraged to record their measurements accurately in metres and centimetres, which they did. The use of assessment information to move learning forward is good, and pupils say that teachers help them to improve their learning. However, although marking is positive it does not consistently inform pupils how to improve their learning. Although pupils have targets in reading, writing and mathematics, pupils in Year 6 do not always know what levels they are working on or how to achieve the levels expected of them in national tests. Nevertheless, assessment is used well to extend the learning of all pupils, especially the more able.

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The curriculum is matched well to pupils' learning and personal needs. A strong emphasis on the promotion of literacy and numeracy skills and good partnerships with local schools, especially to promote boys' writing, has a positive impact on pupils' progress. Careful and detailed planning ensures that skills within each year group in the mixed-age classes are systematically built upon. The recently introduced booster classes for pupils who are not quite reaching their targets are having a positive impact on learning in enabling pupils to reach their targets. The curriculum is enriched through a range of clubs, visits and visitors to the school, which enhance pupils' enjoyment and raise their self-esteem. Parents and carers appreciate the opportunities for their children to complete extended pieces of homework to consolidate their learning.

High levels of supervision and involvement of staff in play time and out-of-school activities with pupils, ensure good safety. Staff provide very good role models and clear consistent guidance to promote good behaviour and relationships with others. Good monitoring and promotion of attendance has led to above-average attendance. The school provides good support to those pupils and families whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable. Good arrangements are in place to support pupils who arrive at school other than at the usual times of admission. Staff ensure that pupils settle in quickly and make good progress in line with other pupils. The school provides equally good support for children entering the Reception Year and for Year 6 pupils transferring to secondary schools.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

## **How effective are leadership and management?**

The headteacher provides strong leadership in making this a good school for all pupils. She is supported in her vision and drive for improvement by the staff and the governing body. Subject leaders use the analysis of data and outcomes of monitoring of planning and pupils' work to match tasks to different levels of abilities. The regular monitoring of lessons and sharing of good practice has led to improvements in teaching and aspects of the curriculum, such as the development of boys' writing and the implementation of booster classes. Members of the governing body visit the school to monitor various aspects, such as health and safety, and to support its work. However, members have not monitored how well the documentation to promote safeguarding reflects recommended best practice. All requirements are in place to ensure the welfare and safety of pupils. The school site is very secure and staff ensure high levels of supervision at all times and safeguarding arrangements are satisfactory overall. The school has good procedures for dealing with any form of discrimination and ensures that all pupils have equal opportunities. This is reflected in the equally good progress different groups of pupils are

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making, including the more able, those who arrive at the school other than at the usual times of admission and those identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school's evaluation of its action to promote community cohesion has had a good impact on the local community and identified further areas to promote global awareness of diversity. The high return rate of questionnaire responses reflects the school's good engagement with parents and carers, who feel they are part of the school family; they particularly praise the high-quality communication between home and school and the school's welcoming ethos.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

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

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Good provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage has led to broadly average attainment at the end of the Reception Year, with above average attainment in children's personal, social and emotional development. Children quickly settle into their routines and make good progress because good use is made of a variety of resources to promote development within the six areas of learning. A strong focus on practical activities with a fine balance between free choice and teacher-led activities promotes good enjoyment and ensures children develop independence and collaborative skills. A sharp focus on the development of children's knowledge and skills in using letters and sounds promotes reading and writing well. Behaviour is good and children feel safe and secure because of the high levels of staff supervision and engagement in children's activities. Good systems of recording gains in children's development are shared with parents and carers who are encouraged to support learning at home. Effective leadership has ensured good improvement since the last inspection, when the effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage was judged as satisfactory. Good leadership has ensured high quality teaching, good use of assessment and that all the learning and welfare requirements are

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fully met. Resources have improved and the outdoor area is used as much as possible to stimulate learning.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

## Views of parents and carers

A high proportion of parents and carers returned their questionnaires, expressing a high degree of satisfaction with the work of the school. Very few parents and carers expressed concerns about the school. These related to supporting their child's learning at home, how the school manages behaviour and how well the school meets their child's needs. Inspectors explored these carefully and found that parents and carers are encouraged to support their children's learning at home, that behaviour is well managed and the school is meeting pupils' needs well.

## 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, Sabden 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 39 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 61 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	31	79	8	21	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	32	82	7	18	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	14	36	20	51	1	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	15	38	19	49	2	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	18	46	18	46	1	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	13	33	20	51	4	10	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	19	49	20	51	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)	21	54	16	41	1	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	19	49	17	44	2	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	20	51	17	44	2	5	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	21	54	14	36	1	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	22	56	14	36	1	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	27	69	8	21	1	3	0	0

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

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

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

### Overall effectiveness of schools

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

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 December 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](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.

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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



24 May 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School, Sabden, Clitheroe, BB7 9ED**

Thank you for making my colleague and me so welcome when we inspected your school and for sharing your views with us. We enjoyed talking to you and seeing you work so hard in lessons. I particularly enjoyed accompanying you to Mass and hearing you sing and recite your bidding prayers so well.

We agree with you and your parents and carers that St Mary's is a good school and we can see why you are so proud to be there. You are all making good progress in your learning because teaching is good. You all get along with each other so well and your behaviour is good, which helps you to work hard and do your best in lessons. You are making good progress in English and mathematics, with more of the Year 6 pupils on target to reach the higher levels in the national tests. Teaching assistants provide you with good support for your learning and teachers make sure that they use their knowledge about how well you are doing to give you tasks which challenge you even further. Your school is well run and continues to make good improvements. To make it even better, we have asked your school to make sure that:

- when your work is marked, you always know how to improve your learning and that Year 6 pupils know what levels they are working on and how to move to the next level
- the school's documents which show how you will be kept safe are of high quality.

You can all help by continuing to do your best. Good luck to those of you who are going to be confirmed.

Yours sincerely,

Declan McCarthy

Lead inspector

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