St Mary's Catholic First School
Lucetta Lane, Dorchester, Dorset, DT1 2DD
Tel: 01305 262258
Fax: 01305 257101
E-mail: office@stmarysdorchester.dorset.sch.uk
Website: www.stmarysdorchester.dorset.sch.uk

Head Teacher: Mrs Paula Fearn

24th January 2017

Dear Parents

Ofsted Inspection

We would like to inform you that we have today received a call today from Ofsted and St Mary's will be inspected tomorrow, Wednesday 25th January.

Please see the attached letter from Ofsted about this inspection. Ofsted are keen to know parents views on the school, so please if possible, could you complete the Parent View questionnaire online this evening. The link to the website is www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk or can be found on our school website under Statutory Information, then Ofsted links and Inspection Reports. If you scroll down the page, click on Parent View.

Many thanks for your continued support.

Yours Sincerely

Mrs Paula Fearn
Head Teacher

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.gov.uk/ofsted

raising standards
improving lives

24 January 2017

Dear parent or carer

Inspection of St Mary's Catholic First School, Dorchester by Ofsted

We have just told your child's school that we will inspect it on 25 January 2017. The lead inspector will be Steve Smith, HMI. We are writing to you because we would like to know what you think about the school. Please take a few minutes to read the leaflet which came with this letter. It explains why we inspect schools, and what happens during an inspection.

Your views about the school are important to us

If you are a registered parent or carer of a pupil at the school (including pupils on sick leave or who are temporarily excluded), you can tell us your views about the school by completing Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, at: www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk.

Parent View asks for your opinion on 12 aspects of your child's school, including the progress made by your child, the quality of teaching, how the school deals with bullying and poor behaviour. It also provides a free-text box for you to make additional comments, if you wish. The inspectors will use the online survey responses when inspecting your child's school. Written comments can also be sent to the school in a sealed envelope, marked confidential and addressed to the inspection team.

To register your views, you will need to provide your email address, which will be held securely. It will not be used for any purpose other than providing access to the online survey. Neither schools nor Ofsted will have access to any email addresses.

Please complete the online survey by **noon** on 25 January 2017 as this will give the inspection team more time to consider your views. However, we will consider all online responses that are completed during the inspection, although the free-text box facility will not be available after noon on 25 January 2017.

Speaking to an inspector

If you are unable to complete the online survey, it may be possible to speak to an inspector during the inspection, for instance at the start of the school day, or to pass on messages to the inspectors if you are unable to speak to them in person. Inspection administrators will be happy to make the necessary arrangements. If concerns are raised about child protection, we may have to pass the information we receive to social services or the police. You can contact the administrators on 03000131522. Inspectors will be pleased to receive your comments, but cannot deal with complaints about individual pupils or settle disputes between you and the school.

Thank you in advance for taking the time to complete the online survey.

Yours faithfully

Courtney Woodman



As well as completing the survey, you can use Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, at any time during the school year to give Ofsted your opinion of your child's school. You can also use Parent View to see survey results for schools across England. Visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.gov.uk/ofsted



School inspections

A guide for parents[1]

This document applies to all maintained schools including special schools and pupil referral units. It also covers academies, city technology colleges, city colleges for the technology of the arts and some non-maintained special schools in England.

Age group: 0–19
Published: September 2016
Reference no: 160054

Contents

[1] 'Parents' refers to mothers, fathers and/or carers.

Why does Ofsted inspect schools?	3
Who inspects schools?	3
When do inspections happen and how long do they last?	3
What judgements do inspectors make?	3
What happens if Ofsted judges a school to be 'inadequate'?	4
Short inspections	5
How much notice do you give to a school before you inspect?	5
What happens during an inspection?	5
How can I make my views known?	6
Can I speak to the inspectors?	6
What happens after the inspection?	6
Where can further details be found about school inspections?	6
What happens if I have concerns about the inspection?	7
What happens if I have concerns about my child's school?	7

Why does Ofsted inspect schools?

We inspect schools to provide information to parents, to promote improvement and to hold schools to account for the public money they receive. School inspections are required by law. We provide an independent assessment of the quality and standards of education in schools, and check whether pupils are achieving as much as they can.

Who inspects schools?

Her Majesty's Inspectors and Ofsted Inspectors (who in most cases are serving school leaders who inspect for Ofsted for an agreed number of days each year) carry out the inspections. All inspectors have been trained to, and assessed against, Ofsted's standards.

When do inspections happen and how long do they last?

A school that was judged to be outstanding at its last inspection is exempt from routine inspection. We will not normally inspect exempt schools unless we have a concern about their performance. Ofsted will also carry out an annual assessment of an exempt school's performance (from the third year after the school's last inspection) to determine whether an inspection might be necessary. Exempt schools continue to be inspected as part of Ofsted's programme of surveys of curriculum subjects and aspects of the curriculum. Exemption from inspection does not apply to maintained nursery schools, special schools or pupil referral units.

A school judged to be good at its last inspection normally receives a short inspection (see section on 'short inspections' below).

A school judged as requires improvement at its last inspection will be subject to monitoring from inspectors to check its progress and is inspected within a period of around two years. If at that inspection it is still judged as requires improvement, there will be further monitoring, and another inspection will take place within a further two years. If at this inspection it is still not good, it is highly likely that it will be judged inadequate and deemed to require special measures.

A standard inspection usually lasts two days and the number of inspectors on the inspection team will vary according to the size and nature of the school.

What judgements do inspectors make?

Inspectors will make graded judgements on the following areas using the four-point scale:

- Effectiveness of leadership and management
- Quality of teaching, learning and assessment
- Personal development, behaviour and welfare

- Outcomes for children and learners.

Where applicable, inspectors will also make a graded judgement on the effectiveness of the early years or sixth form provision in the school.

We give schools an overall grade from 1 to 4:

- grade 1 (outstanding)
- grade 2 (good)
- grade 3 (requires improvement)
- grade 4 (inadequate).

The school must take all reasonable steps to make sure that parents of pupils at the school receive a copy of the report.

What happens if Ofsted judges a school to be inadequate?

If inspectors judge a school to be inadequate, it will be placed in one of the following two categories of concern.

- **Special measures** – This means the school is failing to provide its pupils with an acceptable standard of education, and is not showing the capacity to make the improvements needed.
- **Serious weaknesses** – This means that one or more of the key areas of the school's performance require significant improvement, but leaders and managers have demonstrated the capacity to improve.

A maintained school judged as inadequate and placed in a category of concern will be issued with an academy order by the Secretary of State for Education to require it to become a new sponsored academy.[2] Inspectors will not normally monitor the school unless there are concerns or there is a delay in the school becoming a sponsored academy.

For an academy that has been judged as inadequate and placed in a category of concern, inspectors will visit the academy to check on its progress until it can be removed from the category (unless it is re-brokered with a new sponsor to become a new sponsored academy). Ofsted will re-inspect an academy that has been judged as having serious weaknesses within 18 months of its last standard two-day

[2] Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) judged inadequate will also be issued with an academy order and will be required to become an alternative provision sponsored academy. Maintained nursery schools judged inadequate are not subject to academy orders and will be monitored in the same way as academies that have been judged inadequate (as per the next paragraph).

inspection, and re-inspect an academy judged to require special measures within two years of its last standard two-day inspection.

Short inspections

A school judged to be good[3] at its last inspection normally receives a short one-day inspection approximately every three years. In primary schools with fewer than 600 pupils on roll, short inspections are conducted by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI). In all secondary schools and large primary schools (600 pupils or more on roll), short inspections will be led by an HMI accompanied by a team inspector. The purpose of a short inspection is to determine whether the school continues to provide a good standard of education[4] and whether safeguarding is effective. If there is sufficient evidence of improved performance, and it is reasonable to believe that the school may be judged outstanding, we will carry out a standard two-day inspection instead, usually within 48 hours. Similarly, if HMI have insufficient evidence to satisfy themselves that the school remains good, or there are concerns, we will carry out a standard two-day inspection instead, usually within 48 hours.

Schools should inform parents of pupils at the school that the report of the short inspection has been published.

How much notice do you give to a school before you inspect?

Most schools receive notice of their inspection on the afternoon of the working day before the inspection begins. However, Ofsted can inspect any school without notice where this is judged to be appropriate.

What happens during an inspection?

Inspectors look at the school's self-evaluation and analyse the pupils' progress and attainment. They talk to the headteacher, governors, staff, and pupils, and consider your views as a parent. They spend most of their time observing a wide range of lessons and looking at the quality of teaching in the school, and its impact on learning and progress. They also look at the personal development, behaviour and welfare of pupils at the school, the promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; and how well the school is led and managed.

For information about the inspection of boarding or residential provision in schools, please refer to the guidance for schools on being inspected as a boarding or residential school: www.gov.uk/guidance/being-inspected-as-a-boarding-andor-residential-school.

[3] Or a maintained nursery school, special school or pupil referral unit judged to be good or outstanding.

[4] Or whether the maintained nursery school, special school or pupil referral unit school continues to provide a good or outstanding standard of education.

How can I make my views known?

If you are the registered parent of a child at the school, the school will send you a letter notifying you of the dates of the inspection. This letter provides you with details and options for providing your views. Our survey site, Parent View, is the main source we use to gather parents' views about a school. Inspectors will use the views expressed on Parent View when inspecting your child's school.

Can I speak to the inspectors?

You may have the chance to speak to the inspectors during the inspection, for example at the start of the school day. The inspection administrators will be happy to pass on messages to the inspectors and may be able to arrange telephone conversations if you are unable to speak to them in person. Their contact details will be in the letter that tells you about the inspection. Please remember that inspectors cannot deal with complaints concerning individual pupils or settle disputes between you and the school.

What happens after the inspection?

The lead inspector reports her or his judgement to the headteacher and governors. The inspectors' findings are published in a report for the school, parents and the wider community. Inspection reports provide information about the effectiveness of the school's work and contain recommendations about what the school should do to improve further. Reports are published on our website: http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/.

Where can further details be found about school inspections?

The 'Common inspection framework: education, skills and early years'[5] sets out the principles that apply to inspection and the main judgements that inspectors make when conducting inspections.

The 'School inspection handbook'[6] and 'School inspection handbook – section 8'[7] set out the statutory basis for inspections, what schools can expect at inspections and provide guidance for inspectors on making their judgements.

What happens if I have concerns about the inspection?

[5] 'Common inspection framework', Ofsted, June 2015; www.gov.uk/government/publications/common-inspection-framework-education-skills-and-early-years-from-september-2015.
[6] 'School inspection handbook', Ofsted, June 2015; https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-inspection-handbook-from-september-2015.
[7] 'School inspection handbook – section 8', Ofsted, June 2015; https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/handbook-for-short-monitoring-and-unannounced-behaviour-school-inspections.

Complaints are rare, but we treat them very seriously. You can find out more on our website at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted/about/complaints-procedure, or by calling our helpline on 0300 123 4666.

If you need any more information about our work, please visit our website or call our helpline.

What happens if I have concerns about my child's school?

If you are concerned about your child's school, you should start by talking directly to the teachers or headteacher or, if necessary, the governing body or the local authority. If you are not satisfied with the responses you receive Ofsted may be able to help.

You can find out more on our website or by calling our helpline.
Helpline: 0300 123 4666
www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: http://eepurl.com/iTrDn.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted
No. 160054
© Crown copyright 2016