

St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106508
Local authority	Wigan
Inspection number	377414
Inspection dates	13–14 February 2012
Lead inspector	Geoffrey Yates

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	192
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	K Winstanley
Headteacher	J Hanley
Date of previous school inspection	5 November 2008
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Introduction

Inspection team

Geoffrey Yates
Chris Maloney

Additional inspector
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspection team visited 15 lessons, observing seven teachers. Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders teaching staff, the Chairman of the Governing Body and groups of pupils; inspectors also heard eight pupils read. There were no responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) to take account of in planning the inspection. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at governing body minutes, the systems for assessing and monitoring pupils' progress, safeguarding procedures, pupils' work, and teachers' planning and marking. Inspectors took account of questionnaires completed by 49 parents and carers and those completed by pupils and staff.

Information about the school

St Bernadette's is an average-sized primary school. Most pupils are of White British heritage. There are well below average numbers of pupils learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The percentage of pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs is below average. The school has achieved a number of awards including the Eco-Bronze award, gained for environmentally-friendly activities. The school exceeded the government's current floor standards for academic performance. There is on-site provision for children under the age of three but this provision is not managed by the school and will be the subject of a separate inspection. At the time of the inspection major building work was taking place to enlarge the school building.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- This is a good school. It is not outstanding because while progress in mathematics is good overall it is not consistently good across the school, especially for the more-able pupils and teaching is good rather than outstanding.
- Under the good leadership and management of the headteacher, senior leaders and the governing body, the school promotes pupils' learning successfully and serves its community well. It generates, through its good curriculum, a love of learning with good opportunities for pupils to use their literacy skills.
- Pupils' achievement is good. Children achieve well in the Early Years Foundation Stage. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment is above average in English and mathematics. This represents good progress and pupils are in a good position to make the transition to secondary school. An above-average proportion of pupils attains the higher Level 5.
- The teaching of early letters and sounds is precise and rigorous, leading to above-average attainment. Pupils learn well because positive relationships between teachers and pupils are strong. Some aspects of teaching are not as strong. For example, not enough is done in providing clear guidance to pupils about how they might improve their mathematical skills, and work is not always matched well to pupils' academic needs. Weaknesses in writing found at the time of the previous inspection have been eradicated with pupils having a good knowledge of how to improve their own work.
- Parents and carers think highly of the school. Pupils' behaviour is good and incidents of bullying and racial harassment are very rare and dealt with well. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep safe in various situations. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development is good overall. However, the school's provision for ensuring that pupils have a good understanding of cultures different from their own is not as strong.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the rate of progress pupils make in developing their mathematical skills to be at least consistently good across the school by:
 - ensuring that lessons provide a greater depth of challenge in tasks involving problem-solving activities, especially for more-able pupils
 - ensuring that pupils are better informed of what they need to do to improve the work they do in mathematics.
- Increase pupils' understanding of cultures different from their own by building into the curriculum more opportunities for pupils to visit and research different localities and to meet with a range of visitors.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils' achievement is good overall. Work in lessons, in exercise books and the school's tracking data about progress confirm that pupils mostly make good progress and there is little difference in the overall achievement of different groups. There is, however, some inconsistency in the progress of more-able pupils in mathematics. Good progress is evident, in English for example, in Year 2 when pupils produced writing of very good quality as part of a project about fairgrounds. One pupil's poem included the lines, 'Slipping and sliding on the helter skelter, screaming and shouting on the ghost train.' The progress of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is good. They receive good support in lessons which supports their good achievement. An enhanced tracking system of the progress pupils make ensures that pupils at risk of falling behind are identified early and additional support is put in place to ensure these pupils achieve well. This has helped the school to be very successful in ensuring that pupils make consistently good progress in reading and writing.

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills in line with those expected for their age. They make good progress and exceed the expected levels on entry to Key Stage 1. Throughout the rest of the school pupils continue to make good progress. An overwhelming majority of parents and carers thinks that their children are making good progress in school; inspectors agree, but progress in mathematics, especially that made by more-able pupils is not consistently good in every class. Attainment at Key Stage 1 has risen over the last three years and is above average for all subjects. Inspection evidence demonstrates that the above-average attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 in the latest national tests has been maintained.

Attainment in reading is above average by the end of both Year 2 and Year 6. In lessons observed, it was clear that the development of phonics and early reading in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 are a major strength of the school. It is linked well to developing writing; this was evident in the emerging writing on display linked to 'Dora's Egg' in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Examples of pupils using phonic strategies effectively were observed across the school.

Quality of teaching

Parents' and carers' views that teaching is good are confirmed by the inspection. Teaching assistants are deployed well. Learning intentions are shared well in literacy and topic work and staff are consistent in ensuring that the pupils know how to be successful in their tasks but are less so in mathematics lessons. Teachers' good knowledge of the content they teach enables them to pose questions effectively and also to answer pupils' questions fully. The teaching of writing and reading are key strengths. However, while there are some good examples of work being well-matched to pupils' needs in mathematics, this is not always the case. As a result some of the work set, including tasks involving problem-solving, lacks sufficient challenge for more-able pupils in particular. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, the good teaching provided by the teacher and teaching assistant ensures that there is a wide range of challenging activities, covering all areas of learning, but the small outdoor area places limitations on the quality of provision.

Staff provide welcoming, interesting and attractive classroom environments which support learning well. Throughout the school the curriculum is well-planned and lessons are usually well-paced, making good use of time. This ensures that there are plenty of examples of practical activities in science and design and technology that allow pupils to use their skills well. For example, in Year 3 the building site manager asked the pupils help him to decide what materials should be used to complete the newly-created information technology area. This allowed pupils to discuss and experiment, for example, deciding whether opaque or transparent materials should be used. Year 2 pupils have designed and made fairground models of a good quality.

Throughout the school the impact of teaching on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is evident and staff have good strategies to manage behaviour. The skilled planning of opportunities for developing pupils' reading skills keeps the pupils focused. Teachers use paired talk regularly to support the pupils' speaking and listening skills effectively and also their social development through negotiating ideas. Marking is helpful and supports the next steps in pupils' learning but is not as strong in mathematics. Staff keep good records of pupils' progress.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The school's Christian ethos ensures that there is a positive and welcoming atmosphere. The good levels of pastoral support from the learning mentor and other staff ensure that there is sensitive support for those pupils who need it. Parents and carers reflect the pupils' positive views and they are almost unanimous in saying that their children are kept very safe in school. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and learning. Pupils' good behaviour reported in the previous inspection has been maintained with pupils behaving well both in lessons and around the school. Pupils who may have a concern are confident that all the adults will help them. Pupils say that they feel very safe in school and that the rare incidences of bullying of any kind are dealt with well. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe in various situations, including the potential hazards that might occur as a result of the building work that is taking place.

From an early age, children develop good social skills and positive attitudes to learning. These qualities are maintained throughout the school. Pupils are polite and respectful. Attendance overall is above average. Pupils willingly participate in the tasks that they are given and are very supportive of each other when working in small groups. For example,

Year 6 pupils worked exceptionally well together in compiling stage directions for their play scripts. The quality of work produced in the school's mathematics and science theme week confirms that, across the school, pupils take a real pride in their achievements.

Leadership and management

Good leadership and a focus on the correct priorities have resulted in significant improvement since the last inspection. For example, the quality of pupils' writing has improved and there are plenty of opportunities for pupils to use their skills well in other subjects. Also, the curriculum has been enhanced to ensure that it is interesting and relevant to pupils' needs. There are now greater opportunities for parents and carers to be involved in their children's learning. Attendance has improved and is now above the national average. The professional development of staff continues to be a high priority and, as a result, the majority of teaching is at least good.

The whole-school commitment to do the best for the pupils is clearly evident in all the headteacher and his leadership team seek to do. Good improvements have been made to the school's assessment systems with the information used well. The governing body brings a wide range of skills and meets all its statutory requirements. It challenges senior leaders and staff and its members ask pertinent questions. The chair leads the governing body exceedingly well and has an excellent knowledge of the school's strengths and areas for development. School self-evaluation is accurate. The school development plan focuses clearly on raising standards even further. The consistently good results, the significant improvement since the last inspection, the commitment of staff and governing body, together with the clear vision, indicate that the school has a good capacity to improve.

The curriculum is of a good quality overall and is well-planned, with a good focus on key areas of learning. Different subjects are integrated together in a natural way. A good example is the way the pupils' study of Ancient Greece in history in Year 6 was linked effectively to pupils developing their writing, information technology and design and technology skills. There is a good range of extra-curricular clubs. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall, although aspects of pupils' cultural development linked to raising awareness of cultures different from their own are not as strong. There are not enough opportunities for pupils to visit and research different localities and to meet with a range of visitors. Safeguarding arrangements are secure. Child protection arrangements fulfil requirements. The school provides a safe environment for the pupils. Staff provide equal opportunities in most of the activities that are provided and there is no evidence of discrimination.

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).

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.

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.



15 February 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School, Wigan WN6 8BD

Thank you for the very friendly welcome you gave us when we inspected your school recently. It was good to see you enjoying your lessons so much. We really enjoyed our visit, especially joining you in lessons. The inspectors agree with your school that you receive a good education and that you achieve well. Year 6 pupils told us how much they enjoyed organising the mathematical games for younger pupils during the parents' and carers' open evening. They were rightly proud of the fact that the money they made was going to a well-deserving charity. It was an absolute delight to listen and watch the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage perform their song about the Ark.

We agree with you that all the adults working in your school take good care of you. You work hard in lessons and behave well; you are very polite. You told us that you feel very safe in school and that if problems occur an adult will sort it out quickly when you tell them about it. It was good to see how well you are developing your reading and writing skills, not just in literacy lessons, but also in other subjects. We have asked your school to make sure that in all classes you make at least good progress in developing your mathematical skills, especially those of you who know you are good at mathematics. You are very knowledgeable about how to improve your literacy work, but less so about how to improve in mathematics. The school has been asked to do something about it. You can help by making sure you take full notice of any mathematical targets that are set for you from now on. There is one other thing we have asked your school to do and that is to improve your understanding of cultures different from your own.

I hope you keep on working hard so you can continue to play a big part in trying to make your school even better. Also, keep up your good attendance record!

Yours sincerely

Geoffrey Yates
Lead inspector

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