

Our Lady and St Brendan's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107334
Local Authority	Bradford
Inspection number	356143
Inspection dates	11–12 April 2011
Reporting inspector	Melvyn Hemmings

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	190
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Corcoran Moira
Headteacher	Mrs Anne Springer
Date of previous school inspection	25 February 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors who visited 13 lessons or parts of lessons. The inspectors observed seven teachers and held discussions with members of the governing body, staff, groups of pupils and the School Improvement Partner. They observed the school's work, and looked at school policies, records of meetings of the governing body, assessment information and curriculum planning. In addition, 53 responses to parents' and carers' questionnaires were received and analysed.

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

- How successfully the school has accelerated pupils' progress, particularly for those who are more able.
- The extent to which pupils are actively engaged in learning.
- How consistently teachers use assessment information to set the next steps in learning for individual pupils.
- The extent to which procedures for evaluating the school's strengths and weaknesses have improved.

Information about the school

Our Lady and St Brendan's is a smaller than average-size primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average, as is that of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils who start or leave school other than at the normal time of the year is above average. The school has gained the Activemark and holds Healthy School status.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Our Lady and St Brendan's is a good school. It is a stimulating and friendly place in which to learn. The motivational leadership of the headteacher has been at the heart of the school's good improvement since the last inspection. Working in close partnership with the local authority, she has overseen a variety of initiatives put into place to strengthen the school's performance. As a result, teaching and learning have improved and pupils' progress has accelerated, especially for those who are more able. Self-evaluation is now accurate and gives a realistic view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. This enables leaders to correctly prioritise areas for development, such as ensuring the involvement of all staff in the Early Years Foundation Stage in setting the next steps for learning for children. The monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning in English and mathematics is good but is less well developed in other subjects. The role of the governing body has been enhanced so that it plays an important role in influencing the school's development. The school's track record in making and sustaining improvement since the last inspection shows there is good capacity to ensure the school continues to move forward.

As a result of pupils making good progress through the school, attainment by the end of Year 6 is broadly average in English and mathematics. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make the same good overall progress as other pupils because of the well-targeted extra support they receive. The quality of pupils' writing has improved and they express their ideas satisfactorily through a variety of styles, including narrative and instructional writing and poetry. Nevertheless, writing is a weaker aspect of pupils' performance in English. There are too few opportunities for them to develop their skills further by writing at length across the curriculum. In mathematics, pupils' quick mental recall skills are underdeveloped and, at times, this slows the rate at which they carry out calculations.

Pupils are treated as unique individuals and good attention is given to all aspects of their care, guidance and support. Consequently, pupils say they feel safe and secure in school and comment that, 'staff always put us first'. Teaching has many strengths, with examples of outstanding practice. However, not all teachers provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to explore ideas for themselves and to reflect upon their learning. Pupils behave well and have positive attitudes to learning, which contribute effectively to the progress they make. The well-organised curriculum meets pupils' needs and aspirations. It provides many opportunities for them to extend their learning through enrichment beyond the classroom.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in English and mathematics, by:

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- increasing opportunities for pupils to write at length across the curriculum
- improving pupils' quick mental recall skills in mathematics
- extending pupils' thinking skills by giving them more chances to investigate ideas for themselves and time to reflect upon their learning.
- Extend the good practice for monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning in English and mathematics to other subjects.
- Ensure all staff in the Early Years Foundation Stage are involved in setting the next steps in learning for children.

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

Pupils' achievement is good, taking into account their skills on entering the school, in the Early Years Foundation Stage, which are below those typical for their age. They are keen to learn and carry out their activities enthusiastically. This was exemplified in a lesson for pupils in Year 2 in which they were developing their skills in using adjectives to describe Cinderella. Pupils collaborate well in pairs and small groups and show perseverance when faced with difficulty. They work at a good pace and maintain their concentration for lengthy periods. Pupils speak clearly, and confidently share their ideas with others. They have secure reading skills and enjoy books. Their writing is mainly correctly structured but pupils lack expertise in writing at length to creatively express their ideas. Pupils enjoy their mathematical activities but their quick mental recall skills are underdeveloped. There is no significant difference between the achievement and the quality of learning of different groups.

Pupils enjoy coming to school. They willingly take on responsibilities in school, such as being a play leader or a buddy to look after other pupils. Pupils contribute well to the wider community, such as by fund-raising for charities and taking part in local events. They talk knowledgeably about how to make healthy eating choices and clearly know what might be an unsafe situation. Pupils are polite, considerate and show interest in other peoples values and beliefs. They have a good understanding of the similarities and differences between their own and others' cultures. Pupils' improving attendance and their broadly average attainment mean they are soundly prepared for their future lives.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	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
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
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	2

¹ 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?

Teachers plan their lessons carefully to build on previous work. This enables pupils to use what they already know and understand to support their current learning. They use assessment information well to guide pupils to the next steps in their learning. Pupils are usually actively involved in lessons and motivated to do well. At times, there is too much teacher direction and not enough opportunity for pupils to explore ideas for themselves or to reflect on their learning. Staff work well together to ensure that pupils who join classes during the year make the same progress as other pupils. Teaching assistants are skilled at supporting pupils' learning, particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

A variety of extra-curricular activities, including sports, art and music clubs enrich the curriculum. Pupils' skills are extended through visits to places, such as Kirkstall Abbey and Knowsley Safari Park. Pupils' social and cultural development is enhanced by opportunities for them to work with pupils from schools with ethnic and social backgrounds different to their own. There are limited opportunities for sustained writing across subjects in order for pupils to practise and refine their literacy skills. The curriculum successfully promotes pupils' adoption of a healthy lifestyle, as reflected in it gaining the Activemark and Healthy School status.

The school is a safe and caring setting in which to learn. Staff know the procedures to follow if they have concerns about the welfare of a pupil. The support for pupils who face

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challenging personal circumstances plays an important role in promoting their learning and development. Pupils are given clear guidance on matters relating to their personal health and safety. There are good procedures to ensure pupils who join during the year settle quickly into school routines. Leaders have worked successfully to improve pupils' attendance and punctuality.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

Senior leaders successfully motivate staff to share a common sense of purpose in taking the school forward and morale is high. The governing body is fully involved in evaluating the performance of the school and in planning for further improvement.

The promotion of equality of opportunity is good and no form of discrimination is tolerated. Enhanced procedures for checking the performance of different groups of pupils have enabled leaders to successfully target improvements, as is seen in the accelerated progress of more-able pupils. Staff show a good awareness of equality of opportunity issues and ensure that any stereotypical views are challenged. Leaders evaluate teaching and learning in English and mathematics effectively but are less rigorous in checking provision and outcomes in other subjects. Thorough safeguarding arrangements ensure the safety and well-being of pupils and staff. Training for staff is regular and of high quality, particularly in child protection.

The school works well with others, including the local network of schools and the Bradford Schools Sports Partnership, to enhance pupils' learning and development in areas such as music, science and sport. Leaders promote community cohesion well in school and this leads to it being a harmonious community, with pupils from different backgrounds getting on well together. Good links have been made with a variety of community groups beyond the immediate locality. Cohesion at an international level has been enhanced by links with schools in Gambia and Kenya. The school has a good relationship with parents and carers, who receive frequent information about their children's progress and achievement.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
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	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Good leadership has improved the quality of teaching and learning and the rate at which children make progress since the last inspection. As a result, children achieve well across the areas of learning. There is a good balance between activities directed by adults and those initiated by children. The start of each day is organised effectively to set a series of challenges for children to develop their independent learning skills, particularly in writing and mathematical calculations. Children thoroughly enjoy their activities, such as when dressing as characters in the story of the 'Three Billy Goats Gruff'. They play happily together, willingly sharing resources and taking turns fairly.

An interesting range of enrichment activities add to the curriculum, including the opportunity for children to visit a local farm. Welfare arrangements are good, with all necessary steps being taken to ensure children's safety and well-being. The teacher uses ongoing assessments of children's progress well to set their next steps in learning. Other staff are not as involved in this aspect of children's learning. Good induction procedures result in children quickly settling into everyday school routines. Relationships with parents and carers are positive and they are kept regularly informed about their child's progress.

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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	2

Views of parents and carers

The overwhelming majority of parents and carers who returned the inspection questionnaires were positive about the school's work and the efforts of all staff. Two comments were typical, 'The teachers ensure my daughter is kept motivated and challenged.' And, 'My child is happy and always excited to go to school in the morning.' There was no significant trend of negative views. Inspection judgements support the positive views of parents and carers.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Our Lady and St Brendan's Catholic Primary School 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 53 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 190 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	35	66	18	34	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	34	64	19	36	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	29	55	23	43	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	37	70	14	26	1	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	33	62	20	38	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	30	57	23	43	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	33	62	17	32	1	2	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)	28	53	23	43	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	31	58	20	38	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	26	49	23	43	2	4	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	23	43	28	53	1	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	33	62	19	36	1	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	38	72	15	28	0	0	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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 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"> ■ 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.



13 April 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Our Lady and St Brendan's Catholic Primary School, Bradford, BD10 0QA

Thank you for the friendly welcome you gave us when we inspected your school. We enjoyed meeting you and seeing the many interesting things you do.

The inspectors judge that your school is good and that:

- you achieve well and by the end of Year 6 attain average standards in English and mathematics
- the curriculum is helpfully extended by visits to places such as Kirkstall Abbey and Knowsley Safari Park
- you behave well and enjoy coming to school
- staff make sure you are safe in school and on visits
- you learn a lot in lessons, as indicated in your questionnaires
- the headteacher, staff and the governing body are working hard to help you do better.

This is what we have asked your school to do now:

- improve your mental recall skills in mathematics and provide more opportunities to write at length across the curriculum and to explore ideas for yourselves
- check the quality of teaching and learning carefully in all subjects
- ensure all adults in Reception are involved in guiding children to improve.

All of you are a credit to your school and can help it improve further by continuing to try your best in your activities.

Yours sincerely

Melvyn Hemmings

Lead inspector

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