

St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124372
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	359647
Inspection dates	18–19 May 2011
Reporting inspector	Clive Lewis

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	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	67
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Marese O'Dwyer
Headteacher	Michael Brown
Date of previous school inspection	20 February 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors, who observed three teachers and six lessons and held meetings with groups of pupils, members of the governing body and staff. The inspectors observed the school's work, including a sample of pupils' books, teachers' planning documents, and tracking and assessment data. Questionnaires from 45 parents and carers, 34 pupils and eight staff were analysed.

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

- To what degree do pupils make consistent progress across the school?
- What are the quality and rigour of the school's tracking and assessment system?
- What impact are subject leaders for English and mathematics having on teaching and learning?

Information about the school

The school is much smaller than most primary schools, and although pupil numbers have risen from 39 five years ago to 67 currently, low numbers remain in the older year groups. The headteacher currently has a full-time teaching commitment and the school is in the process of recruiting an additional teacher. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is lower than average. There are no pupils who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average, but very few have a statement of additional needs. The school has recently achieved a Healthy School award.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

St. Bernadette's is a satisfactory and improving school. The effective leadership and teamwork of the headteacher and senior management team, coupled with a more stable staffing situation, have ensured that teaching and learning have improved and, as a result, lessons are now consistently satisfactory or better across the school. Clear priorities have been set for further improvement. Staff clearly want the best for each pupil and strive hard to achieve this goal through working closely with families and external agencies. Parents and carers are extremely supportive of the school. They particularly like the positive family atmosphere. One commented: 'The school is very inclusive and parents are welcomed into the school to join in with planned activities to see how children are responding,' and another wrote: 'My son always enjoys going to school and is making excellent progress. The school has a wonderful friendly family atmosphere.'

Pupils make satisfactory overall progress. Standards and progress in writing have risen well due to a range of initiatives, but standards in mathematics remain below those in reading and writing. There are clear indications that attainment and progress are beginning to improve rapidly. However, tracking data and lesson observations show that standards are higher for pupils in younger year groups and the improvements in provision have yet to work their way through to the end of Key Stage 2, where standards remain broadly average. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Some good examples were observed across the school, but in a number of lessons the pace of learning was too slow and work was not sufficiently tailored to the needs of different ability groups within the class.

Pupils' personal development is good. They have a good understanding of how to keep safe and of the need for healthy lifestyles. Parents and carers say their children really enjoy coming to school and pupils agree enthusiastically. A strong moral code is implicit within the school's ethos and this is reflected in pupils' good behaviour. This in turn has a positive effect on the good progress pupils make in most lessons. In most instances, they work hard and conscientiously, both independently and cooperatively, without the need for constant adult intervention. The curriculum ensures that pupils benefit from a good variety of activities and experiences through visits, bi-annual residential stays and visitors to school, and its impact is beginning to be seen in pupils' increased enjoyment of lessons and resultant improved progress. Good care, guidance and support ensure that all pupils are able to learn and develop confidence, regardless of their individual circumstances. Secure systems are now used to assess and track pupils' progress in order to ensure that any pupil falling behind is identified quickly and support is provided. However, these new systems, including termly pupil progress meetings, have only been introduced very recently and have not yet become fully effective. The school's links with the local community and organisations are strong, but it has yet to develop ties with groups further afield in this country or overseas. The school has a satisfactory understanding of how well

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it is doing and what needs to be done next, and has a satisfactory capacity to maintain and sustain improvement.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is good or better throughout the school, by ensuring that:
 - lesson activities are carefully and consistently planned with sufficient challenge to motivate pupils and fully engage them in their learning
 - a brisk pace is maintained throughout all parts of each lesson.
- Improve pupils' attainment in mathematics by devising strategies to improve pupils' calculation and problem-solving skills.
- Broaden the impact on community cohesion beyond the local community by formulating a plan to promote the national and global dimensions.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Attainment on entry to the school varies considerably from year to year, but overall it is broadly at the levels expected nationally. The very small numbers of pupils in some years, and the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities in some year groups, make comparisons between key stages and year groups less meaningful than in larger schools. Children make satisfactory progress in the Reception class, and satisfactory progress overall as they move through Key Stages 1 and 2. The standards seen in Year 6 were broadly average. To some extent standards are limited by the very high levels of mobility - a high proportion of the current Year 6 have joined the school in the last two years - but pupils' numeracy books also indicate some inadequate teaching in the past. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress because of the appropriate support provided by teachers, teaching assistants and outside agencies. The school has welcomed a number of pupils who joined after experiencing difficulties in their previous schools and these pupils make good progress due to the effective support of skilled staff and the welcoming attitude of other pupils.

Observations during lessons and around the school confirm that pupils' behaviour is good and a credit to the school, and reflects their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Most pupils show considerable respect for the feelings and beliefs of others. The great majority have good attitudes to learning and develop considerate relationships with peers and adults. They understand the need for healthy lifestyles and for exercise. Pupils have a satisfactory range of opportunities to contribute to the school and local communities. The school has good systems to monitor and improve attendance. Levels have improved as a result, although the attendance of a small but persistent minority of pupils continues to cause concern. By the time they leave the school, pupils' satisfactory academic skills, good behaviour and good social skills have prepared them satisfactorily for their future education and the world of work.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
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	3
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?

There are some strong features in the teaching provided, and a number of good lessons were observed. Nonetheless, teaching is not consistently good enough to ensure the rapid progress pupils must make in order to raise attainment. Most teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge. They ensure classroom routines are made clear and regularly reinforced so that learning takes place in a well-structured environment in which all pupils can contribute to lessons. Learning intentions are made clear at the beginning of each lesson and, as a result, pupils know precisely what it is that they are expected to do. Teachers are developing a better understanding of the progress the pupils in their care are making due to a regular termly analysis of assessment and tracking data. In one good Year 2/3 literacy lesson, the teacher motivated and inspired the pupils very effectively, providing a very positive learning environment, with pupils of all abilities clearly enjoying their work and keen to learn and make progress. However, in some lessons where teaching was satisfactory, the pace of learning was slower and too much time was given over to activities reviewing work that the majority of pupils already understood. Teachers' marking of pupils' work is up to date and encouraging but does not consistently point out what steps pupils should take to improve further.

As a result of the strong focus on improving writing during the past year, pupils know their targets for writing, although they are less secure about their numeracy targets. A particular and developing strength of the curriculum is the move towards more cross-

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curricular themes, and pupils told inspectors that they really liked their new lessons, where they are able to consolidate their key skills in the context of imaginative topics. Pupils are provided with a good range of enrichment opportunities to develop new skills and interests. These include well-attended after-school clubs, with a range of sports activities across the year. The school's good arrangements for the care of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, contribute to their good development and well-being and support their learning very well. When needed, a wide range of specialists and support agencies is called upon to support those pupils whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
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?

The school has dealt effectively with the issues raised at the last inspection. The headteacher, with the support of the senior management team and the governing body, has dealt appropriately with the turbulence in staffing and the rapidly increasing school roll and has begun to tackle areas requiring further improvement with greater rigour. The school's assessment and tracking system has been significantly strengthened. As a result, teachers have a better understanding of exactly what each pupil in their class is currently achieving and, through regular progress meetings during the year with the headteacher, where pupils need to be by the end of the year. Strategies for improving attendance have been strengthened and are beginning to show some signs of success. The governing body fulfils its statutory duties, is supportive and is beginning to challenge the school to do well. The school has a very positive relationship with parents and carers, and its strong links with a wide range of external providers contribute well to pupils' learning and progress. The school is very inclusive and promotes equal opportunity in all its work. It adopts recommended good practice for safeguarding pupils across all areas of its work and quality assurance and risk assessment systems take full account of the views of pupils and their parents and carers. The school identifies dangers, fosters a realistic understanding of risk and helps pupils to keep themselves safe. The school makes a satisfactory contribution to community cohesion. Although it has good links with the local community and links with a Catholic school in India, the school realises that pupils' understanding of the wider national and global dimensions are not yet sufficiently well developed.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
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	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Provision for the youngest children is satisfactory. Children clearly enjoy school, have settled into the routines well and play happily together and independently. They undertake a variety of whole-class and group activities and, in most cases, cooperate well when working with others. They delight in learning and seeing new things. Pastoral care and welfare arrangements are effective. Consequently, children are safe, well cared for and aware of how to be healthy. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are suitably supported and are integrated well into all activities. The Early Years Foundation Stage classroom has a secure outdoor area, which is directly accessible from the classroom, although it is not always used to its best advantage in terms of providing regular opportunities for children to select activities freely for themselves, both indoors and outdoors. This restricts the development of their independent learning skills. Adults have a sound knowledge of the learning and development and welfare requirements and guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage. They manage children and their behaviour appropriately. The adoption of a new system of assessment and tracking of individual children gives practitioners a clearer and more accurate view of both the attainment on entry and the progress of the children, which is satisfactory across the areas of learning.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

Around 67% of parents and carers returned the inspection questionnaire. The overwhelming majority of those who responded expressed totally positive views and declared themselves very happy with the school. One did not agree that the school helped his/her child be healthy, but did not explain why. Every other parent or carer who responded agreed or strongly agreed with all of the other statements. This is an extremely positive response which confirms the school's excellent relationships with parents and carers.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Bernadette'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 45 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 67 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	33	73	12	27	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	32	71	13	29	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	27	60	18	40	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	24	53	21	47	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	24	53	21	47	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	29	64	16	36	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	22	49	22	49	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)	25	56	19	42	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	23	51	22	49	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	21	47	24	53	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	24	53	21	47	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	30	67	15	33	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	31	69	14	31	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	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).

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">■ 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.



20 May 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School, Wolverhampton WV5 8DZ

Thank you for welcoming the inspectors to your school and for talking to us about what you do there. St Bernadette's is a satisfactory school. Those who lead your school do so satisfactorily and provide you with good care and guidance. It was good to see that you clearly enjoy school and that you know how important it is to eat healthily and take regular exercise. It is to your credit that most of you behave well and get on well with each other and with all the staff. However, although your standards in reading and writing are clearly improving, I have asked the school to further raise standards by:

- improving teaching so that all your lessons are as exciting and interesting as they can be, in order that you all make good progress in every lesson
- finding ways to help you improve your calculation and problem-solving strategies so that your work in mathematics improves
- making plans to develop links with schools and other organisations in the United Kingdom and overseas so that you can gain a better understanding of the way communities live in other parts of the world.

You can do your bit to help by continuing to attend the school regularly and working hard to learn your mathematical tables.

Once again thank you for being so welcoming during our visit.

Yours sincerely

Clive Lewis

Lead inspector

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