

St Bernard's Catholic Primary School

Station Road, Shirehampton, Bristol, BS11 9TU

Inspection dates 18–19 October 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils make good progress across the school and so achieve well.
- Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6 has been rising. It is now above the national average for primary schools.
- Teaching across the school is usually good with some outstanding practice in Years 5 and 6 and in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Teachers are skilled at planning activities that allow pupils to learn in many different ways.
- Pupils feel safe, behave well, and enjoy their learning.
- The headteacher has been highly effective in leading the changes that have resulted in rapid improvements in teaching and pupils' achievement since the previous inspection. She is now ably supported by senior leaders and the governing body.
- Pupils have excellent opportunities to develop and lead their own times of reflection and deepen their spiritual understanding.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not always high enough in Years 1 and 2.
- Pupils in Years 3 and 4 are not always clear about what they need to do to move up to the next level in their work.
- Those new to their leadership roles in school and to the governing body do not yet have the skills to be fully effective in helping to raise the pupils' achievement further.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector spent time in eight lessons and saw six members of staff teaching and working with the pupils. She was accompanied by the headteacher to all of these lessons.
- Meetings were held with members of staff, the governing body and a representative of the local authority and with pupils from Years 2, 4 and 6.
- The inspector heard pupils from Years 1 and 6 read.
- The inspector observed the work of the school and looked at the school's development plans, minutes of the governing body meetings, safeguarding guidelines, the school's records of pupils' progress and work in pupils' books. She also looked at the record of children's work and progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- The inspector took account of the 30 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and held informal discussions with parents and carers at the start of the day.

Inspection team

Jenny Batelen, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-size primary school, with five classes.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in the Reception class. Pupils in Years 2 to 6 are taught in mixed-age classes for all subjects except for those in Years 2 and 3 who are taught English and mathematics in their separate year groups.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average; these include pupils with complex learning needs.
- The majority of pupils come from White British backgrounds with a small percentage from a range of other ethnic backgrounds.
- A below-average number of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is below average. The pupil premium is extra money given to schools by the government to support pupils who receive or have received free school meals, looked after children and children from Service families.
- The school meets the government floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.
- The school has had considerable changes in staffing and in the membership of the governing body since the previous inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement further by:
 - ensuring that all pupils in Years 1 and 2 are suitably challenged so that they remain focused and engaged in learning throughout each lesson
 - ensuring that all pupils, especially those in Years 3 and 4, always know what level they are working at and what they need to do to improve.
- Increase the skills of those new to leadership and governance so that they can be fully effective in raising achievement.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skill levels that are broadly in line with those expected for their age and make good and sometimes excellent progress in all areas of learning.
- Progress is good overall. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and pupils in Years 5 and 6 make the most rapid progress, reflecting the consistently high-quality teaching in those year groups. Progress in other year groups slows on occasions because of too much variation in the quality of teaching.
- There is some evidence of better progress in Years 2 and 3 in English and mathematics following the introduction of separate year groups for the teaching of these subjects.
- The skilled teaching of phonics (sounds that letters make) throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 ensures that pupils can confidently use a range of skills to read known and unknown texts and also use these skills when writing. Pupils in Year 6 spoke with enthusiasm of authors such as J K Rowling and Michael Morpurgo.
- The recently introduced mathematics calculation policy is helpful in ensuring that pupils are being taught the necessary basic skills to tackle a range of mathematics problems. Although this initiative is recent there is some evidence of pupils growing increasingly confident in their use of calculation.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are able to make good, and sometimes accelerated, progress because their needs are clearly identified and appropriate support is in place to help them in class, in small groups and individually.
- Pupils who are from ethnic backgrounds other than White British and those who speak English as an additional language are well supported and make good progress in line with their peers. They are valued members of the school community and encouraged to share their cultures to enrich and broaden the understanding of pupils of traditions other than their own.
- The targeted use of the pupil premium enables the school to ensure that these pupils are well supported, not only in the classroom, but in small group work and one-to-one sessions. As a result they are able to make good progress in all subjects.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers plan a stimulating range of learning opportunities for pupils to enable them to make good progress in their lessons. They work closely with skilled learning support assistants to provide appropriate work for all pupils in their classes.
- Ongoing formal and informal assessments mean that teachers know exactly how well pupils are doing. They usually plan tasks to ensure that pupils make good progress towards achieving the next level. Sometimes the challenge provided for some pupils in Years 1 and 2 is not demanding enough. Consequently, in some parts of some lessons, pupils do not stay focused and their learning slows.
- Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are very clear about the level they are working towards and know what they must do to reach the next one. This is not always so clear for younger pupils in Years 3 and 4 and, as a result, they are sometimes not sure how they can improve their work.
- Teachers use a range of effective strategies to excite the pupils about their learning. Pupils in Year 2 acted out the role of a fox to develop their understanding about how the fox would be feeling. They then confidently wrote the story from the animal's point of view. Pupils in an outstanding mathematics lesson for Years 5 and 6 had great fun rehearsing multiplication table facts using different voices as they chanted.
- Adults encourage pupils to use correct subject-specific language, particularly in mathematics, English and science. This was evident in a mathematics lesson for Years 4 and 5 pupils as they investigated the arrangement of consecutive numbers in a grid. They were encouraged to use

the correct terminology as well as explain the patterns they found and check for the consistency of these patterns.

- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage have a rich experience in a well-equipped classroom and outside area. Adults have a thorough understanding of how young children learn and plan activities that excite and interest them. This was very evident as children learnt the sound 'l' and how to write it. Saying it, writing it in the air and on their partner's back ensured they understood the sound and could then practise writing successfully using paint, shaving foam and whiteboards. Some children responded to the challenge to find objects beginning with the sound.
- Homework supports and extends pupils' learning well. Parents and carers appreciate the fact that it is set on a consistent and regular basis.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils behave well around school. They care about each other and play well at break times where they enjoy being active using a range of climbing and adventure equipment.
- Year 6 pupils 'buddy' with Reception Year children and this helps the younger children settle and be part of school life.
- The regular reinforcement of agreed procedures throughout the school and speedy interventions ensure that those who may find it difficult to manage their own behaviour are helped to stay on task and to handle classroom relationships. As a result, disruption to learning is rare and none was in evidence during the inspection. Records confirm there have been two fixed-term exclusions since the previous inspection.
- Pupils enjoy their learning. They speak of how their teachers make lessons fun. Very occasionally pupils' interest is not held well enough, resulting in a lack of focus by a few in lessons.
- Pupils are sure that there is very little bullying and that staff deal very effectively with any problems so that they are quickly resolved. Pupils appreciate how the school helps them to understand about different types of bullying and how this helps them to know how to deal with any possible problems, such as cyber-bullying. Most parents and carers support this view and say that their children are kept safe in school and are happy to come, and that behaviour is good.
- Pupils feel safe and they know how to keep themselves safe; for example they have a good awareness of fire and bike safety. Pupils and parents and carers are given clear guidance about keeping safe when using modern technology.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher is a very strong leader and has driven through successful improvements in teaching and achievement since the previous inspection, despite significant changes in staffing and in the governing body.
- She has ensured that teaching improves at an individual level. The process of setting targets for teachers allows them to focus on individual development points, as well as whole-school priorities. As a result the process ensures that teachers' pay is closely linked to the raising of pupils' achievement.
- Senior leaders clearly identify what needs to improve in different subjects and various aspects of teaching, including marking. Good action plans indicate how these improvements will be carried out and evidence shows that teachers are becoming better equipped to deliver consistently good quality lessons, particularly in English and mathematics. The school acknowledges that there are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching across year groups.
- Careful record keeping and checking of individual pupils' progress is undertaken by all staff. Consequently, appropriate interventions are quickly in place to ensure equality of opportunity for all pupils, regardless of their abilities and backgrounds, and that there is no discrimination, for

example, between boys and girls. Some teachers are new to particular leadership responsibilities and although they are well supported, they have yet to fully develop the skills needed to be effective leaders.

- The curriculum provides a range of exciting and imaginative experiences so that pupils enjoy their learning about a range of topics. Visits and visitors and links with other schools enrich this learning for both pupils and staff.
- Excellent opportunities to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding encourage pupils to be thoughtful and responsible citizens of the global community. They understand about the lives of others, both in the United Kingdom and worldwide.
- Pupils are encouraged to reflect on a range of issues. This was clearly demonstrated as Year 5 and 6 pupils led their class in a time of reflection following a religious education lesson about 'shalom'. The lesson included a thoughtful discussion about current world events; the reflection allowed pupils to deepen thoughts about peace at a personal level.
- Parents and carers value the school and are supportive of events that involve them and help them understand their children's work.
- The local authority has been highly effective in supporting the leadership of the school, including the governing body, during this period of rapid change and improvement.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance has undergone rigorous review, including reorganisation and training, since the previous inspection. As a result, the governing body is knowledgeable and able to ask searching questions of the school leadership and to know how well pupils are doing. There is an induction process to support new governors to develop their skills in order to contribute fully to the monitoring of the work of the school. The governing body has been effective in ensuring that finances are well managed and that any extra funding, particularly the pupil premium, is used wisely to benefit pupils. It regularly monitors and reviews policies, including those relating to safeguarding and ensures that staff are vetted and trained in order to keep pupils safe and free from harm.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	109246
Local authority	Bristol
Inspection number	401309

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	138
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Linda Dineen
Headteacher	Meg Wilson
Date of previous school inspection	14–15 July 2010
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