

# St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School

Lindale Drive, Wombourne, Wolverhampton, WV5 8DZ

## Inspection dates

5–6 February 2013

| Overall effectiveness          | Previous inspection: | Satisfactory                | 3        |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|----------|
|                                | This inspection:     | <b>Requires improvement</b> | <b>3</b> |
| Achievement of pupils          |                      | Requires improvement        | 3        |
| Quality of teaching            |                      | Requires improvement        | 3        |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils |                      | Good                        | 2        |
| Leadership and management      |                      | Requires improvement        | 3        |

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Pupils' progress requires improvement in English and mathematics. Despite recent improvement, their achievement is not yet good.
- The pace of learning in some lessons is not brisk enough and so pupils' progress is too slow.
- In some lessons work is not set at the right level for pupils and so they do not make as much progress as they should.
- Teachers do not always give pupils time to think about, correct and improve the work that has been marked so that pupils can move their learning on.
- Systems for subject leaders to check and develop the quality of teaching are not yet fully effective in ensuring consistently good teaching or better achievement.
- Until recently, governors have not challenged leaders enough about the school's performance or developed their own independent view of how well it is doing by gathering evidence for themselves.

### The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher provides strong leadership and has a clear vision of what she wants the school to be like. Plans for improving the school contain the correct areas for development.
- Teaching is improving and examples of good and outstanding practice are now found across the school.
- The school has raised the achievement of pupils whose circumstances make them eligible for extra funding.
- The school provides a safe, caring environment for its pupils.
- Pupils' behaviour is good in lessons and around the school.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed eight lessons, four of them jointly with the headteacher. In addition, he made short visits to other lessons and scrutinised pupils' work.
- Meetings were held with pupils, the headteacher, teachers, teaching assistants, members of the governing body, the school's consultant adviser, a local authority adviser and informally with parents and carers.
- The inspector scrutinised a variety of school documents, including the school's self-evaluation, the school development plans, behaviour records, and documents relating to the management of teachers' performance.
- The inspector also considered the views expressed in nine questionnaires returned by school staff, along with the 27 responses submitted by parents and carers to the online Parent View survey.

## Inspection team

Keith Brown, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than most primary schools.
- It serves the village of Wombourne and surrounding villages.
- The current headteacher took up post in September 2012.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium (additional government funding) is below the national average.
- Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. There are none who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils receiving extra support through school action is broadly average as is the proportion supported at school action plus or through a statement of special educational needs.
- Pupils are taught in three mixed-age classes.
- The school's most recent results cannot be compared to the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum standards for pupils' attainment and progress, because there were not enough pupils to make such comparisons meaningful.
- No pupils are taught in alternative provision away from the school site.
- The school runs a daily breakfast club.
- Cloud 9 Nursery operates in a self-contained wing in the same building as the primary school. It is not managed by the governing body of the primary school and is inspected separately.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make teaching throughout the school consistently good or better by:
  - making sure teachers use assessment information to set work that is closely matched to pupils' needs and abilities
  - ensuring the teaching is always conducted at a brisk pace
  - providing time for pupils to think about what teachers have said and written about their work and to make the appropriate improvements to their work
- Improve leadership and management by:
  - making sure that subject leaders' judgements when monitoring and evaluating lessons are clear and precise enough to lead to improvements in the quality of teaching
  - ensuring the governing body receives sufficient information about the school's effectiveness to hold it to account for all areas of its work.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- The achievement of pupils requires improvement because too few pupils make good progress over time. This is because there is too much variation in the quality of teaching.
- Although pupils' abilities vary from year to year and numbers are small, children generally start at the school with knowledge and skills that are in line with those typically expected for their age. In recent years most children made steady progress in the Reception Year and most are working securely at the level expected for their age in all areas of learning. Too few, however, accelerate their learning to make really good progress.
- Pupils start Year 1 with knowledge and skills that are generally in line with those expected for their age. When they leave in Year 6, their results at the end of Key Stage 2 in English and mathematics have been broadly average over the last three years.
- In the past, the school's assessment of how well children in Reception were doing was not always accurate. This year the school has introduced much more rigorous systems to monitor children's progress. Teachers and teaching assistants know the children well and now plan activities that the children clearly find interesting and enjoyable. The progress of children in the Reception Year has improved this year.
- Recently, the progress made by pupils in Key Stage 1 has also improved. The national assessments at the end Key Stage 1 in 2012 showed improvements in the performance of pupils in reading, writing and mathematics. Results in these tests in the previous two years were broadly average.
- This year the school is tackling weaknesses in reading in Key Stage 2 by introducing a more systematic approach to developing pupils' ability to really understand what they are reading. They are consequently becoming more confident about reading fluently and on their own. An increased focus on grammar and spelling this year is leading to improvements in pupils' writing.
- Until recently, some Key Stage 1 pupils' reading skills were underdeveloped. However, last year the school introduced improvements to the teaching of phonics (how to link letters to the sounds they make) to younger pupils. This has helped pupils to do well in the 2012 national screening check at the end of Year 1.
- Pupils have appropriate calculation skills. However, some pupils do not always think about, check and improve their marked work sufficiently. This year the school has involved parents and carers well in helping their children to improve their understanding of mathematics. The school is introducing more opportunities for pupils to use and apply their mathematical work in different subjects to carry out investigations, particularly in science.
- The school has improved its support for pupils eligible for extra government funding through the pupil premium. Additional information and communication technology (ICT) resources, use of small-group work, and funding for educational visits are being used purposefully to help pupils to overcome the barriers they face in their learning. As a result, gaps in attainment between these pupils and their classmates are closing.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make similar progress to other pupils, with an increased number making good progress this year. Their needs are identified early and

the work set is closely matched to their ability levels. Teaching assistants help pupils by teaching them the specialist vocabulary for various subjects, demonstrating the skills they need to learn precisely, and making sure they are encouraged to do their best at all times.

### **The quality of teaching** requires improvement

- Lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and the school's own monitoring data all show that teaching is improving. There is some good and outstanding practice. However, there is not enough consistently good teaching in English or mathematics, to enable good achievement over time.
- Teaching requires improvement because the information teachers have on pupils' progress is not always used well enough to ensure that the work in lessons is closely matched to pupils' different needs and abilities. Lessons are not always hard enough and the pace of learning not always brisk enough. This is sometimes because the teacher spends too long talking in parts of the lesson and so pupils' interest starts to wane.
- Pupils all understand the school's marking system. In English and mathematics especially, teachers praise high-quality work regularly and give clear feedback to pupils about how they can improve. However, teachers do not always give pupils time to reflect on and improve work that has been marked, so that pupils can learn more quickly.
- All classrooms have bright stimulating displays. There are clear prompts for learning, such as key words, examples of what a good piece of writing looks like and examples of efficient methods for doing calculations.
- Teachers have strong subject knowledge and usually explain clearly what they want pupils to do. Work is suitably modified for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- Where good or better teaching was observed, teachers had very high expectations and they provided well-targeted feedback to the pupils. They used questions very well to check pupils' understanding. In a high-quality English lesson, for example, the careful planning by the teacher and the skilful feedback resulted in pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 making very rapid progress in producing some really persuasive writing.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

- Pupils' good behaviour in the school contributes to the calm, purposeful atmosphere. They have good attitudes towards their learning. Pupils are confident and polite in conversation with staff and visitors. Parents and carers are very positive about behaviour in the school.
- Older pupils relish the opportunity to take on extra responsibilities. They enjoy being house captains and play leaders. The school council is influential and has helped raise considerable sums of money for charities, as well as advising on which extra playground equipment the school should buy.
- Pupils know about different types of bullying, including that which stems from any kind of prejudice. They are also aware of the dangers that careless use of the internet poses. Pupils say bullying is very rare but if there are any incidents, they are dealt with quickly and effectively.

- Pupils say they feel safe in school and parents and carers agree. It provides a safe and secure environment that is appreciated and valued by everyone. Pupils of all ages work and play together well.
- Pupils are punctual at the start of the school day and arrive at lessons promptly. The school's robust actions this year have led to a sharp improvement in pupils' attendance.
- The breakfast club is efficiently organised and supervised and provides pupils with a range of purposeful activities. It helps working families and has also boosted punctuality.

### **The leadership and management**

### **requires improvement**

- This is an improving school, but the rate of improvement has not been fast enough to raise its effectiveness to good. This is largely due to inconsistencies in the quality of teaching that have held back pupils' progress.
- The new headteacher's leadership is purposeful and clear. She has worked relentlessly this year to ensure that teachers and teaching assistants focus more sharply on improving the quality of teaching. Staff morale is high. Governors and staff share the headteacher's determination to improve the school and ensure that all pupils achieve what they are capable of.
- There has not been time for many of the new initiatives to show their full impact. For example, procedures for subject leaders to check and develop the quality of teaching, including frequent lesson observations and ongoing training for all staff, are becoming more rigorous and are now leading to improvements. However they have not yet been established long enough for them to become fully effective in ensuring consistently good teaching.
- Self-evaluation is accurate. Plans to improve the school identify correctly what needs to be done.
- The school has introduced a new system to enable staff to track pupils' progress more accurately. This is starting to identify pupils who need additional support to close gaps in their learning more quickly and there is now evidence of pupils making faster progress. The school's current data on its pupils' attainment show they are making better performance than in previous years.
- This year teachers are being held more accountable for the progress of their pupils and for the subject areas they lead. Targets are set for teachers to improve their performance and discretionary pay awards have to be earned.
- The range of subjects and activities that pupils receive is adequately matched to their learning needs. Pupils enjoy the regular 'theme' days the school organises. On a recent 'France' day, for example, pupils learned a lot about French language, towns, customs and food. Visits, visitors and a wide range of well-attended art, dance, foreign language, music and sports activities all promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively.
- The local authority offers effective support to the school's leaders through its personnel department. Recently the local authority delivered high-quality pupil safeguarding training to all school staff and several governors.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The Governing Body has appointed a headteacher who has begun to make significant

improvements in the quality of teaching and is improving pupils' progress. Some governors are visiting the school more frequently, so that they know more about aspects of its day-to-day teaching and performance. Governors are increasingly holding the school to account and are improving their ability to challenge leaders. However, until recently they relied too much on the information provided by the headteacher. They now compare the school's performance with that of other schools more effectively, and are aware that there is more to be done to accelerate pupils' progress, improve teaching and raise attainment. They are increasingly ensuring that the salary progression of staff is justified by the evidence of teachers' impact on achievement. Governors know about the use of additional funds from the pupil premium to improve the achievement of the pupils entitled to it. The school's safeguarding arrangements are rigorously checked by the Chair of Governing Body who has responsibility for pupils' safety. As a result, safeguarding arrangements meet current requirements.

## 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

|                                |               |
|--------------------------------|---------------|
| <b>Unique reference number</b> | 124372        |
| <b>Local authority</b>         | Staffordshire |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 406238        |

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

|  |                                     |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Primary                             |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Voluntary aided                     |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 4–11                                |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed                               |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 76                                  |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body                  |
| <b>Chair</b>                               | Marese O'Dwyer                      |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Jane Keegan-Hobbs                   |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>  | 18 May 2011                         |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                    | 01902 894787                        |
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