

# St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School

Lindale Drive, Wombourne, Wolverhampton, WV5 8DZ

**Inspection dates** 21–22 January 2015

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Pupils achieve well throughout the school because teaching is good and teachers' expectations are high. By the end of Year 6, pupils reach above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The children in the Early Years Foundation Stage learn and develop well because of good teaching and activities that encourage them to investigate and discover.
- The school is led and managed strongly by the headteacher who drives improvements with determination.
- Subject leaders are having a good impact on pupils' achievement and teaching through their careful monitoring and effective actions.
- The governing body is a key player in the school's good capacity to improve because it oversees the school's performance meticulously and challenges its impact on teaching and achievement rigorously.
- Teaching is consistently good because it challenges and supports all groups of pupils to achieve well.
- The new curriculum has been planned well to promote pupils' good progress and their personal development.
- Teaching assistants provide effective support for those pupils who need extra help to develop secure skills in literacy and numeracy.
- Pupils' spiritual, social and moral development is promoted excellently through the school's ethos, routines and learning. As a result, pupils have positive attitudes to learning, and behave sensibly and considerately towards other pupils in lessons and through the school day.
- Pupils feel safe and know what to do to stay safe.
- Pupils are prepared well for secondary education.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to practise their numeracy skills in other subjects, particularly in using their mental calculation skills, in order to embed these skills.
- Pupils' cultural development is not sufficiently broad to ensure they appreciate diversity.
- Teachers' performance targets are not always measurable or have clear, challenging goals to ensure that they fully meet the needs of the school in its drive to be even better.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning in eight lessons of which seven were observed with the headteacher.
- The inspector spoke with pupils while they were playing and learning and held a formal meeting with a group of pupils to hear their views about their school. She watched an assembly, listened to numerous pupils reading and watched several pupils being supported with their learning in small groups.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, subject leaders and members of the governing body. She talked with several parents at the start of the school day and spoke by telephone to a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector looked at a range of documents about the school's work, including information about pupils' achievement, the school's improvement plan, governing body minutes and how the school ensures it helps pupils to stay safe. She checked samples of pupils' work with the headteacher.
- The inspector considered the 35 parental responses to the online Ofsted questionnaire (Parent View) in carrying out the inspection. She also checked the 12 responses to the staff questionnaire.

## Inspection team

Lynne Blakelock, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is smaller than most primary schools. The number on roll is increasing and the school is over-subscribed for September 2015. All pupils attend full-time in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- The vast majority of pupils are White British and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of pupils known to be disadvantaged and therefore supported through the pupil premium is above average at 33%. The pupil-premium funding is additional funding for disadvantaged pupils, including those who are eligible for free school meals and those children that are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average at 11%.
- The school works in partnership with St Christopher' Catholic Primary School and St Mary's Catholic Primary School Brewood to share good practice and training.
- The number of classes increased from three to four in September 2013 to better meet the needs of the pupils. Children are taught discretely in Reception and in mixed age classes, Years 1/2, Year 3/4 and Year 5/6.
- Cloud Nine is a private nursery catering for children aged two to four which shares the school's premises. It also runs an after-school club. It is inspected separately.

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

- Provide regular opportunities for pupils to apply their numeracy skills, especially their mental calculation skills in other subjects, to secure their understanding of this aspect.
- Make sure that all three of the teachers' individual performance targets are measurable, challenging and have clear goals in order to drive progress even quicker.
- Broaden and deepen pupils' cultural understanding from the Reception class onwards by making sure that meaningful opportunities are built into the curriculum.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- This is a school that is able and totally driven to become the best that it can be. Led strongly by the headteacher and the governing body, the school knows itself well. Its priorities for improvement are based on regular and accurate evaluations of its work and quick actions to address its findings.
- In this small school, the staff work effectively as a team, planning together and supporting each other. This contributes to the positive environment in which the pupils learn and grow. New staff are supported very well so that they quickly become effective in their roles.
- Since the last inspection, teaching has improved and is good. All groups of pupils achieve well. Subject leaders are taking more leading roles in driving improvements in teaching, achievement and in implementing the new curriculum. Behaviour is good and attendance has risen to above average because the school has high expectations of both.
- The leadership of teaching is good. Teaching is observed regularly, judged accurately and is linked to the rate of pupils' progress over time. Pupil progress meetings, held half-termly, ensure that pupils' achievement is considered thoroughly and teachers are held to account for how well all groups of pupils learn.
- Teachers' performance targets focus on the needs of the school in further improving teaching and leadership. Targets are well matched to the school's priorities but targets are not always measurable or challenging. They do not consistently tell teachers what they have to achieve in order to be awarded a pay rise.
- Subject leaders manage and lead their areas well. The special needs coordinator, for example, has carried out an audit of the children's needs which has resulted in sharper and specific support for pupils' individual needs and their quicker progress. The staff's good knowledge of the needs of pupils supported by the pupil premium funding has meant that they progress similarly well to other groups of pupils. Provision is good in the Early Years Foundation Stage because of the leaders' and staff's good understanding of how children learn.
- Pupils like learning. The broad range of subjects and opportunities enable them to develop a wide range of knowledge and skills. Pupils' personal and spiritual development, including British values, is equally well promoted, ensuring that together with their academic achievement, pupils are prepared well for secondary education. Pupils' cultural understanding is an area for further development because it is not sufficiently included in learning or broad enough to enable pupils to appreciate the richness of cultural diversity. There is no discrimination and carefully planned teaching ensures that all pupils have an equal chance of achieving their potential. After-school activities are varied and popular and cater for all pupils.
- Sports funding has created opportunities for pupils to develop skills in a much broader range of activities, such as gymnastics. Partnerships with other schools enable specialist teaching and also coaching for staff. The school is also able to offer more activities at playtimes and lunch times. As a result, pupils' skills, enjoyment and awareness of the importance of physical fitness have risen. They are delighted to have a sports day and to participate in inter-school competitions.
- Other partnerships also benefit the school. For example, the local authority has provided excellent advice and guidance, on a wide range of aspects, for example, in building-up the school's understanding of learning and development in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Links with two primary schools enable the staff of the three schools to share ideas, training and to plan together, including for the new curriculum.
- The partnership with parents, who are delighted with the school, benefits the pupils because their parents are kept well informed about their children's progress and well-being, and have opportunities to help them learn through the workshops that the school organises, for example, in reading.

- The school helps to keep pupils safe, through good security systems and through safeguarding procedures that meet the statutory requirements.

#### ■ The governance of the school:

- The governors are highly effective in supporting and challenging the school because they know it exceptionally well. Their comprehensive knowledge is supported by the range of skills that they bring to their roles which means that the impact of every aspect of the school's work is monitored by them. It includes attendance, pupil premium funding and safeguarding. The governors work together with the staff to ensure that the school can keep improving in all areas.
- The headteacher keeps the governors very well informed. However, it is their own independent findings, through regular meetings with subject leaders, their participation in lesson observations and learning walks, and their scrutiny of pupils' work, that ensures that they can question the school deeply and comprehensively. They know that teaching is good.
- Members of the governing body undertake regular training. As a result, for example, they understand what information about pupils' progress is telling them and question the headteacher robustly about the latest data.
- Governors take time to meet regularly with pupils to hear their views about their school, including about the difference that sports funding is making to them. They take what the pupils say very seriously.
- The governors know how pupil premium spending is spent and judge it to be effective, due to the pupils' good academic progress and personal development.
- They also understand the role of performance management in improving teaching and achievement and therefore the necessity for teachers to achieve all three targets to be awarded a pay rise. They are supportive towards those who need additional help to perform to the expected standards.

### The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

#### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils know and understand the rewards and sanctions linked to their behaviour and attitudes and show their respect for them by following the rules.
- In lessons, from the Reception class onwards, pupils take their learning seriously. They settle down quickly and pay attention to what they are seeing, hearing and doing throughout the lesson. Occasionally, if they finish work and have nothing else to do, they chat a little.
- Around the school, pupils behave very sensibly. In what they say and do, they promote the Catholic faith which is the basis of the school's work. Assemblies, in particular, focus on pupils putting their faith into action in how they treat others. They are awarded house points for showing collective responsibility which reinforces their knowledge that they should show kindness, consideration and support towards the other children.
- The pupils demonstrate their understanding of the school's values by taking responsibilities they are given very seriously from the Reception class onwards. Door monitors, playground buddies, school council representatives and fruit monitors are all examples of the pupils' service to others.
- This small school has a family feel to it. Pupils play, eat and learn in a happy and sociable environment

#### Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Pupils are very aware of the importance of keeping safe and the ways they can help themselves to stay safe. This awareness has increased because the school involves them in working out what to do to keep the school a safe place, such as opening and closing the gates under the supervision of the headteacher.

- Pupils say that they feel safe because everybody looks after each other. There is little bullying because everyone knows it is wrong. Pupils know who to go to if they have any concerns.
- The school ensures that pupils understand the wide range of potential dangers they may face. The children in the Reception class learn quickly to move sensibly indoors and outdoors. The older pupils understand risks such as in using the internet and talking with people they do not know.
- Pupils show a very clear understanding that they must show tolerance and respect for everybody, whatever their religion, race or gender because that is the right way to live and how they want to be treated.
- Pupils' attendance is above average and continues to rise. Very few pupils are now regularly absent because the school checks on their attendance rates daily and works with parents to make sure they understand the importance of their children attending school every day that they possibly can.

### **The quality of teaching** is good

- Teaching is consistently good and occasionally outstanding. It results in pupils' good progress over time in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The basis for pupils' good learning is their desire to learn well and the positive relationships they have with the staff.
- Pupils know exactly what they have to achieve in their work and teachers check that they are on track by providing guidance as learning proceeds. Teachers aim questions at particular pupils which helps them to know how well each pupil is learning and whether they need extra support.
- Pupils learn more quickly because they are all given tasks that accurately match the levels at which they are working.
- Teaching assistants provide effective support for the learning of pupils who find some aspects of literacy and numeracy difficult. They know exactly what these pupils need to be able to learn and guide them towards their goal.
- Pupils' reading and writing skills are strengthened by the many opportunities to write at length and to practise them in other subjects. Corridors in particular are full of examples of pupils' writing about, for example, the visit of a member of parliament, which also shows pupils' good understanding of democracy, an important British value.
- Pupils read very regularly, for enjoyment and to develop skills in reading and understanding texts. They like the new library and the wide range of books which appeal well to girls and boys.
- Marking is helpful, especially in the information it gives pupils about how well they have achieved. Many pupils respond to their teacher's marking, an aspect which is incorporated into lessons as a key factor in pupils' further progress.
- The school has focused successfully, overall, on improving pupils' mathematics skills. However, there are not yet enough opportunities for pupils to develop and practise mental calculation skills regularly in other lessons to ensure that these skills are securely embedded.

### **The achievement of pupils** is good

- Pupils achieve well throughout the school. All pupils make better than expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics from their individual starting points because their needs are met well in the mixed-age groups.

- Over three years, standards by the end of Year 6 have risen from significantly below average to above average in writing and mathematics and well above average in reading.
- There is a similarly good picture of achievement by the end of Year 2, because careful checking of pupils' rate of progress, matched with good teaching, ensures standards continue to rise. Standards have been well-above average for the last three years and continue to rise so that the gap between the standards reached in the school and nationally is widening.
- In the small cohorts, standards can vary but the school's forecasts, backed up by pupils' work and lesson observations, show good progress of most groups of pupils in all year groups. Pupils are given extra help if the half-termly collection of information about their progress shows any under-achievement.
- All pupils reached the expected standards in phonics (the sounds that letters make) in 2014 because it is taught well from the Reception class and the pupils use their skills in phonics to decipher words throughout the day. Pupils, particularly at the early stages of reading, use this skill to decipher sounds.
- All groups of pupils make similar rates of progress, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, due to careful tracking of their progress and good support.
- Only a few pupils are entitled to pupil-premium funding and therefore comparisons between their achievement and that of pupils not entitled to the funding are statistically unreliable. However, overall, they make similarly good rates of progress to other groups in reading, writing and mathematics. Support matches their individual needs, through additional staffing to help them with reading, writing and mathematics and extra resources. Funding also ensures these pupils have equal access to school trips.
- The most-able pupils are learning well because tasks help them to develop higher level skills and to apply what they learn. This was very evident in a Year 5/6 numeracy lesson in which pupils used their understanding of percentages in solving complex problems about the reduced cost of buying a footballer or holding a wedding. Year 4 pupils who have good skills in mathematics join this class to ensure they can achieve their potential over time.

### The early years provision

is good

- Children start the Reception class with levels of skills and knowledge that are typical for their age.
- The staff know a lot about the children when they start school because they have met with them and their parents, and with the setting they previously attended.
- Parents have confidence in the school, which welcomes them and provides a safe learning environment. They are able to help their children with their learning and development because of the information the staff give them, including in workshops about phonics.
- Children enjoy the many activities they get to choose from, all of which are carefully planned, in and outdoors, to ensure that they develop skills in the 17 areas of learning. The teaching assistant provides high quality support.
- The children like stories, which are used very well to encourage them to speak, listen and write. Several children are writing in simple sentences, helped by the good teaching of phonics and are able to give opinions about the characters in a story.
- By the end of the Reception class, all groups of children, including disabled children, those with special educational needs and the most-able children, have made good progress because teaching is consistently good. Their good progress is supported by regular checking of their learning and planning that builds on from what they know. An above average proportion of children achieve a good level of development in all areas of learning, increasing from just below average last year.

- The children also make good progress in their personal development because the staff have clear expectations of how they behave. They are polite and helpful and know it is important to treat others kindly.
  
- Leadership and management are effective. They ensure that activities enable the children to discover, explore and question, and at the same time take responsibility for their actions. Learning journals provide evidence of wide and broad learning which prepares the children well for Key Stage 1. The staff look to improve provision further, and are focusing on seeing how they can improve more the impact of outdoor learning.

## 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>	453501

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>	83
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Marese O'Dwyer
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jayne Keegan-Hobbs
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	5 February 2013
<b>Telephone number</b>	01902 894787
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