

St Bernadette Catholic Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100628
Local Authority	Lambeth
Inspection number	276353
Inspection dates	28–29 June 2006
Reporting inspector	Kay Charlton

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Father Christopher Basden Mr Tony Board
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Atkins Road Clapham Park London SW12 0AB
Telephone number	02086732061
Fax number	02086757196

Age group	7–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

St Bernadette Catholic School is an average-sized junior school. Pupils come from a wide range of ethnic groups and about half speak English as an additional language. Twenty two different languages are spoken, the most dominant being Spanish. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average and a high proportion of pupils have learning difficulties. Attainment on entry is average although it varies from year to year. The school has the Basic Skills Quality Mark.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade:

What the school should do to improve further

- * Ensure that all teachers set challenging work for pupils.
- * Ensure that subject co-ordinators monitor and evaluate their subjects effectively.

Achievement and standards

Grade:

Personal development and well-being

Grade:

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade:

Teaching and learning are good. Staff work very well as a team and show a high level of commitment to every pupil. With a great sense of enthusiasm they encourage pupils in their learning and use a wide range of techniques to make learning enjoyable. Staff manage pupils' behaviour very well and a calm and purposeful atmosphere pervades the school. As a result all pupils can participate fully in lessons and their level of involvement is especially noticeable in English. In mathematics, staff usually start lessons well with a 'quick-fire' mental starter but once the pupils move on to the next stage of the lesson, work is not always well matched to pupils' abilities and consequently in these lessons a few do not make the progress they should. There are, however, models of outstanding practice in mathematics. In a lesson observed in Year 6 staff made excellent use of 'small step' targets to ensure every pupil was clear how they could sharpen up their thinking.

In all subjects staff mark pupils' work conscientiously. In English, the comments are particularly helpful in showing pupils how they might improve but in mathematics there is a tendency for comments to be too general.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade:

The curriculum is good and there is excellent enrichment. A good emphasis is placed on the development of pupils' basic skills and work is modified well for pupils with learning difficulties and those who speak English as an additional language. Literacy is developed very systematically across the school. The consistency of approach is recently improved in numeracy with positive effect, notably in the use of the plenary session at the end of lessons. Information and communication technology is used effectively in all subjects. The curriculum is reviewed regularly and is adapted well to match pupils' changing needs. The programme for personal, social, health education and citizenship is a very strong feature and plays an important part in helping pupils to become confident, caring and responsible young people. Good use is made of the rich diversity of pupils' backgrounds to enhance the provision. Pupils across all year groups take part in an exceptionally wide range of extra-curricular activities including clubs, and visits out of school.

Many visitors with a range of specialist skills, such as sports coaches, make a very positive contribution to the curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade:

The care provided by the school is outstanding, and the academic support and guidance is good. Pupils' views are seen as extremely important and pupils are confident that they can refer to staff if they have a problem. The school provides excellent opportunities for staff to take time to listen to pupils, for example in the small group sessions in the 'Learning Zone', through the 'Circle of Friends' group and through its mentoring system. Pupils say that any incidents of bullying or racial discrimination are rare and dealt with thoroughly. Risk assessment procedures are rigorous and child protection procedures are firmly established. Health and safety procedures are robust.

Academic guidance and support is good. Assessment information is used very effectively to set 'small step' targets that help guide pupils' learning in English. This is not as effective in mathematics and targets tend to be too global.

Leadership and management

Grade:

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Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Pupils

Thank you for your help when we came to inspect your school on 28 and 29 June 2006. You are rightly very proud of your school. The inspection shows that yours is a good school where you make good progress. However, test results in mathematics are not as good as in English and science and you can still do better in this subject. Teaching and learning, and the curriculum are good, and it is clear that you really enjoy going to school each day. You say that you think that all the extra things that you get a chance to do are 'brilliant' including the many clubs and visits that you take part in. You say that the staff help you a lot and care for you extremely well and we agree.

The inspection found that you develop your personal skills very well and your spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. You clearly appreciate the quiet times that you have to pray and this was very noticeable during the visit you made to church during the inspection. You develop a strong belief that the feelings of others should help guide your actions and you behave very well. Relationships are very good and you are right to point out that 'you make good friends at this school'. Your views count, for instance when you helped to make decisions about whether girls should or should not wear trousers as part of the school uniform. You are developing the personal qualities that prepare you to take responsibility as citizens of the future extremely well.

The headteacher and the senior management team support the staff very well and are helping everyone to develop their skills so that the school can improve. You can play an important part by making sure that all of you work really hard to improve standards in mathematics even further. Teachers are going to visit different classrooms to see that you are all doing your best. I am sure that each one of you wants to help St Bernadette School improve.

Yours sincerely

Kay Charlton

Lead Inspector