

Our Lady and St Brendan's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 107334 |
| Local Authority | Bradford |
| Inspection number | 309381 |
| Inspection dates | 25–26 February 2008 |
| Reporting inspector | Ann Sharpe |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Voluntary aided |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School | 146 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mrs Corcoran Moira |
| Headteacher | Mr Ray Smith |
| Date of previous school inspection | 16 May 2005 |
| School address | The Bank Idle Bradford West Yorkshire BD10 0QA |
| Telephone number | 01274 611992 |
| Fax number | 01274 622992 |

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors

Description of the school

Most of the pupils attending this small school are White British: a few pupils are from a range of other ethnic backgrounds. The school serves an area that is characterised by some social and economic disadvantage. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is above average, as is the proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Since the previous inspection the number of pupils on roll has reduced.

During the headteacher's recent absences the deputy headteacher has led the school. This was the case during the inspection.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Our Lady and St Brendan's Catholic Primary is a satisfactory school and provides satisfactory value for money. Pupils are very polite, courteous and friendly. They are happy at school, enjoy taking part in all that the school has to offer and say that they feel well cared for. Since the previous inspection the school has continued to provide a sound quality of education, despite several staff changes and absences. The deputy headteacher ensures that pupils' education is not disrupted in times of staffing instability. Staff respond well to the changes in leadership so that the school runs as smoothly as possible. Consequently, by Year 6, pupils' achievement is satisfactory.

Pupils of all ethnic backgrounds, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and vulnerable pupils, make satisfactory progress from their varying starting points. Although teaching and learning are satisfactory, overall, there is inconsistency in quality between classes. Pupils make most rapid progress in Years 2 and 6, where teaching and learning are at their best. Change is managed so that the teaching of Year 6 is not compromised. For other year groups, some lessons lack the excitement and fun needed to capture pupils' interests. Consequently, pupils' progress is somewhat uneven. Although the school has done well to increase the proportion of Year 2 pupils reaching the level expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics, too few pupils attain higher levels than expected for their age. In 2007, Year 6 pupils met or exceeded their targets for performance in national tests in English and mathematics and standards were broadly average to below average. The more able pupils across the school do not always achieve as well as they could. Their work does not provide the chances they need to work towards reaching their learning targets. This is because of slow development of assessment policies and practices.

Pupils enjoy school and are suitably prepared for the next stage of education. The school places a lot of emphasis on pupils' personal development and well-being and, although satisfactory overall, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Year 6 pupils, for example, cannot wait to get their hands on the weekly newspaper, 'First News on Friday'. They enjoy finding out about world events and discussing issues, such as conservation and human rights. As part of the satisfactory curriculum, pupils gain a good knowledge and understanding of how to stay safe and healthy, for example, they are very concerned about road safety. Behaviour is satisfactory, but the challenging behaviour of a few pupils is a cause for concern for staff and some pupils. Despite good efforts by the school to improve attendance, it remains satisfactory.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The deputy headteacher has good support from the other member of the leadership team and subject leaders. Although some staff are fairly new to their roles and are still developing their skills, team work moves the school forward. The school has mainly identified the right priorities for improvement, with a focus on improving behaviour and raising standards in reading and writing. Plans for doing so, however, are not grounded tightly in clear evidence from thorough and robust checking of the school's performance. This is why the school's view of itself is over generous and sometimes inaccurate. Governance is satisfactory. A significant number of governors are new to their role and governors are at an early stage of holding the school to account. Capacity for improvement, therefore, is satisfactory.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

When children start in Reception, their skills are mostly below what is typical for their age. They make satisfactory progress as a result of satisfactory teaching and learning. By the end of Reception, children's skills remain below what is typical for their age. Nevertheless, there are clear signs that children's learning has started to accelerate as a result of recent improvements to provision. Caring, enthusiastic and sensitive staff work together to help children to settle quickly and to enjoy learning. Consequently, children make a satisfactory start with learning to read, write and understand mathematics. Children are happy and confident to try new activities, both indoors and outdoors, and to talk with adults about their learning. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The new Foundation Stage leader is improving the resources and the curriculum to more closely meet children's learning needs. Great strides have been made in securing an accurate view of children's skills when they start school in order to measure their progress by the end of Reception.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve procedures for evaluating the school's strengths and areas for improvement.
- Increase the proportion of good or better lessons, so that pupils make consistently good progress across the school.
- Strengthen assessment, particularly with regard to accelerating the progress of the more able pupils.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' achievement from below average attainment at the start of Year 1 is satisfactory, and leads to broadly average to below average standards by the end of Year 6. In 2007, pupils in Year 6 met or exceeded their targets for performance in the national English and mathematics tests because of the good teaching they received in Year 6. Pupils in the current Year 6 are on track to meet their challenging targets. Pupils of all ages reach higher standards in mathematics than they do in English. This is partly because their starting points are higher in mathematics, but also because they are successful in tackling mental challenges, especially the boys. Although the proportion of Year 2 pupils reaching the standard expected for their ages in reading, writing and mathematics has increased, the proportion of pupils reaching a level higher than expected has declined. The progress of the more able pupils across the school is sometimes restricted because their work does not provide the right opportunities for them to work towards reaching their targets. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress at the same rate as other pupils of their age.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory and their spiritual moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils know the differences between right and wrong. They play and work together happily. School council members talk proudly of their ideas for making

outdoor playtimes more enjoyable. They are keen to set good examples of behaviour for other pupils. Behaviour is satisfactory although improving the challenging behaviour of a few pupils is a main priority for improvement. Attendance is satisfactory. Most pupils enjoy taking part in activities, such as charitable fund-raising, class assemblies and learning about people in the community and other parts of the world. Pupils have a good understanding of healthy and safe lifestyles, for example, they explain how physical exercise, 'gives you energy and helps you to learn' and reflects their Activemark award. Pupils are prepared satisfactorily for transferring to secondary school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Satisfactory teaching and learning enables pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, to make satisfactory progress. Teachers know their pupils well and work closely with caring classroom assistants to make sure that vulnerable pupils do not fall behind. Relationships between adults and pupils are good and pupils say how much they appreciate their 'helpful and friendly' teachers. The school has introduced several initiatives to improve teaching and learning since the previous inspection. However, these have met with varying success because of inconsistencies in the way they are implemented. While there are examples of good teaching and learning, leading to good progress for pupils, especially in Years 2 and 6, some lessons lack interest and excitement for the pupils. Pupils sometimes spend too much time listening to teachers and are not actively involved in working towards their learning targets. This is sometimes because of teachers' concern to prevent the challenging behaviour of a few pupils interfering with the learning of others. Nevertheless, most lessons are orderly and pupils try their best.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum meets the needs, interests and abilities of learners satisfactorily. It gives appropriate emphasis to literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology (ICT). Pupils learn about healthy and safe lifestyles and this contributes well to their personal development. They enjoy a good range of enriching activities, for example, visits and visitors from several community organisations. Such activities also extend pupils' developing understanding that they live in a culturally diverse society. Pupils particularly enjoy opportunities in music, such as participating in the choir, recorder group and band. They enjoy opportunities for energetic exercise, such as the 'huff and puff' daily physical activity routines to get pupils ready for learning. Many of these activities help pupils to learn to get along well together and to cooperate. The school adjusts the curriculum to meet the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Provision for the more able pupils, however, does not always take account of their need to be consistently challenged to develop ideas in new and exciting ways.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Satisfactory provision ensures that learners make satisfactory progress towards their learning targets. Child protection and safeguarding procedures are in place. Most pupils say that they

feel safe at school and always have someone to turn to for help. Staff keep a watchful eye on the welfare of vulnerable pupils, such as those with challenging behaviour and/or attendance problems, but efforts to fully involve parents in their children's learning do not always bear fruit. Pupils say that they like their efforts being rewarded and their achievements celebrated. Strategies are in place to improve procedures for assessing pupils, tracking their progress and informing them about the 'next steps' in their learning. There are still inconsistencies between classes, however, in how well informed pupils are about their progress and what they should learn to do next.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management, including governance, are satisfactory. Since the previous inspection, the school has faced a falling roll, a deficit budget, building works and staff changes and absences. The chair of governors and some subject leaders are new to their roles and the deputy headteacher has taken over the running of the school several times. The highly professional approach taken in these circumstances has provided stability and support for everyone in difficult times. This is why, despite major drawbacks, the school has met most of its targets, standards by Year 6 have been largely maintained, and there have been important improvements in reading, writing and mathematics. Following the appointment of a bursar, finances have improved. New subject leaders have started to get to grips with checking standards. Improvements to the building have been completed successfully. This means that pupils' learning is no longer disrupted by the need to use classrooms as corridors. The school's view of itself as a good school is over generous. This is because robust self-evaluation, including consultation with stakeholders and holding the school to account, are not securely embedded.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate | School Overall |
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Overall effectiveness

| | |
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| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 3 |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection | Yes |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being? | 3 |
| The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage | 3 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 3 |

Achievement and standards

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|--|---|
| How well do learners achieve? | 3 |
| The standards ¹ reached by learners | 3 |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 3 |
| How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress | 3 |

Personal development and well-being

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|---|---|
| How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners? | 3 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 2 |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles | 2 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices | 2 |
| How well learners enjoy their education | 3 |
| The attendance of learners | 3 |
| The behaviour of learners | 3 |
| The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community | 3 |
| How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 3 |

The quality of provision

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|--|---|
| How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs? | 3 |
| How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners? | 3 |
| How well are learners cared for, guided and supported? | 3 |

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

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| How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners? | 3 |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 3 |
| How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards | 3 |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation | 4 |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can | 3 |
| How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money | 3 |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities | 3 |
| Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements? | Yes |
| Does this school require special measures? | No |
| Does this school require a notice to improve? | No |

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Inspection of Our Lady and St Brendan's Catholic Primary School, Bradford,
BD10 0QA

Thank you for welcoming the inspectors to your school and for being so very polite and friendly. You answered all our questions thoughtfully and sensibly, and we thoroughly enjoyed our two days with you. Your behaviour in lessons and around the school was usually good and you are right to want everyone to remember to behave well all the time. Although most of you hardly ever miss coming to school, some pupils still need to attend more regularly.

You are very thoughtful and caring pupils and do a lot to help other people at school and in other parts of the world. The school council is a good way of helping you to learn how to work together and to make your school even better. You know a lot about keeping safe and healthy - congratulations on receiving the Activemark award!

Your school gives you a satisfactory education and you have good opportunities to learn from visits, visitors and special activities, such as assemblies and putting on musical performances. Although you make satisfactory progress in reading, writing and mathematics, there are times when some of you could do better. This is mainly when your lessons are not very interesting, exciting or fun. It also happens when your work is too easy and when you do not have a chance to work towards your learning targets. Sometimes, you do not know enough about what you need to learn next.

Staff care a great deal about each one of you and want you to do well. They work together to make sure that you feel safe and can get help if you are worried.

I have asked the school to:

- make more thorough checks to find out exactly how good the school is
- make sure that you enjoy all your lessons
- make sure that your work always helps you to reach your learning targets and that you know what you have to do to improve.

You can help by asking teachers how well you are doing and by continuing to try your best in everything that you do.