

# St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	124372
<b>Local Authority</b>	Staffordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	314906
<b>Inspection date</b>	20 February 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Don Mason

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

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<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 on roll</b>	
School	49
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Manese O'Dwyer
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mike Brown
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	16 June 2003
<b>School address</b>	Lindale Drive Wombourne Wolverhampton WV5 8DZ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01902 894787
<b>Fax number</b>	01902 324114

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Almost all of the pupils in this small village school are from White British or Irish backgrounds. About half are Catholics. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average overall but varies from none at all to well above average in different year groups. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is well below average. A privately run nursery occupies one classroom leased by the school.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory and improving school. It has the wholehearted support of its parents, who recognise that it has successfully emerged from a difficult period in its history and is now moving forward once again. The following comment is typical of many: 'We are very happy with the school. It seems to be improving all the time.' The pupils display high levels of self-confidence and good personal development.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory throughout the school. Standards are average by the end of Year 6. In recent years there has been some underachievement, especially in writing in Key Stage 1 and mathematics in Key Stage 2. This was partly due to some disruption in staffing but mainly because the systems to check pupils' progress and to provide extra support where necessary were not rigorous enough. This situation has now been remedied. Pupils' progress in English and mathematics is now checked frequently and pupils in danger of falling behind are quickly identified and catered for. However, the improving assessment information is not always used with enough rigour to ensure that pupils, especially the more able, are always provided with work that meets their needs. This is particularly the case in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 and is reflected in the results of national tests.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. The proportion of good teaching is increasing as measures taken to improve the teaching and learning of writing and mathematics begin to impact positively on the progress made by pupils. The pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make as much progress as other pupils. They benefit from the small class sizes and the support they receive from effective teaching assistants. The curriculum makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' achievement in basic skills and their personal development. The curriculum is subject-based and too little time is available for pupils to work on subjects other than English, mathematics, science and religious education. This limits pupils' enjoyment and personal development. The school's curriculum planning makes insufficient links between subjects and does not acknowledge how the basic skills can be effectively enhanced through a broad curriculum. The school's first priority has been to focus on the needs of pupils who have fallen behind. Not enough has yet been done to ensure that teaching and the curriculum meet the needs of all pupils, especially the more able, in order that they make the progress of which they are capable.

A strength of the school is the generous adult-to-pupil staffing ratio and the family ethos engendered partly by its Catholic status. As a result, pupils feel safe and secure. Academic guidance is at an early stage of development. As the teachers gather more evidence about the pupils' achievements and what they need to do to improve further, they are providing their pupils with more effective guidance. This is particularly true in writing, where the pace of improvement is the most rapid. Pupils make a satisfactory contribution to the community through fundraising and taking on duties in school, including organising play activities at lunchtime and in choir activities.

School self-evaluation is effective. Senior leaders have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and what needs to be done to bring about further improvement. The school recognises that, in order to move forward, it needs to set itself and its pupils challenging targets for improvement in order to raise the expectations of all adults in school and ensure that all pupils, particularly the more able, make as much progress as possible in all aspects of their development.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 3

Children's attainment on entry is broadly typical for their ages. As a result of clear routines and warm relationships, children settle in quickly and make satisfactory progress in their learning, especially in their social development. By the time they enter Year 1, most pupils are working at the expected levels for their ages. The activities led by the adults are effectively planned and taught and enjoyed by the children. However, when given a choice, the children tend to gravitate to the adult-led tasks because they are not sufficiently attracted to the free-choice activities on offer. This restricts the development of their independent learning skills. This situation is exacerbated by the fact that the outside area does not fully meet the children's needs. Systems for checking pupils' progress are satisfactory. However, the Foundation Stage children and Year 1 pupils who share the class are treated as separate year groups and the focus is on ensuring that all individuals make at least expected progress rather than seeking to challenge them. The recently introduced daily phonics lessons and more frequent writing activities are beginning to have a positive impact on the progress made by children in writing.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Use assessment information more rigorously, especially in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, to ensure that pupils are always provided with work which meets their needs.
- Set challenging school and pupil targets in order to raise the expectations of what the children can achieve, especially in writing in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 and mathematics in Key Stage 2.
- Establish a broader and more balanced curriculum by giving pupils a greater range of activities across all subjects.

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 make satisfactory progress through Key Stages 1 and 2, with the result that standards at the end of Year 6 are average in English, mathematics and science. Recent national test results have highlighted significant weaknesses in standards in writing in Key Stage 1 and mathematics in Key Stage 2. The school has taken firm action to remedy this situation by assessing pupils' progress more effectively, providing support where it is required and improving the teaching of the subjects. As a result, most pupils now make at least the expected progress and there is clear evidence to show that the rate of progress is improving throughout the school.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Pupils' spiritual and moral development is particularly strong, reflected in the regular times for prayer which engage all pupils regardless of their religious faith. The pupils' understanding of the cultural diversity of the society in which they live is less well developed. Pupils display a good understanding of the requirements of healthy living and take full advantage of the sporting activities available to them in school and in local school competitions and events. Pupils' self-esteem is high

because they believe that their views are welcomed and valued, as shown in the comment: 'In lessons you can speak your mind and not worry if you get something wrong.' This self-confidence and sound basic skills provide pupils with satisfactory preparation for the next stage of their education.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

The satisfactory teaching is improving because checks on pupils' progress are more frequent and the information is used with increasing effectiveness to ensure that work set for pupils matches their needs. This is particularly the case in writing, where teachers now have a better understanding of their pupils' strengths and weaknesses. Pupils understand the purpose of lessons and respond well to clear routines. Teachers display good subject knowledge and plan their lessons effectively. However, teaching is relatively formal and teachers focus too much on year group requirements rather than the learning needs of individual pupils. As a result, whilst most pupils make at least the expected progress, there is sometimes a lack of challenge, particularly for more-able pupils. Pupils say that they enjoy their lessons very much. However, their demeanour in class is sometimes passive and minor misbehaviour occasionally occurs when pupils are not fully engaged in their learning.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

Few activities make links between subjects, limiting their relevance to the pupils and consequently restricting their motivation and sense of excitement. There are few opportunities for pupils to work together in planning and making decisions to develop the skills required for working in groups. The range of visits and visitors provided to enhance learning is satisfactory and includes an annual visit to the Wolverhampton science museum. A good range of extra-curricular activities, including summer sports' clubs, cross-country, computer club and choir, is much enjoyed by pupils. Lessons in science, circle time discussions and a health and safety quiz with local schools promote pupils' good understanding of healthy lifestyles and how to keep themselves safe.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 3**

The pupils respond well to the praise and encouragement they receive, saying, 'We love it when we hear positive things said about us in our prayer time.' Policies to ensure the pupils' safety and well-being are securely in place, although some are due to be reviewed and staff training is not up to date in some areas. Attendance has improved and is now satisfactory.

A number of measures have been introduced to improve the guidance offered to pupils about their achievements and what they need to do to improve their work, but these are at an early stage of development. The quality of marking is variable. It is best in writing, where pupils are given clear advice about how to improve their work.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

Despite having a substantial teaching responsibility, the headteacher has successfully brought the school through a turbulent period in its history. The staffing situation is stable and pupil numbers are increasing, after a decline in recent years, aided by the provision of a private nursery. The arrangements for checking pupils' progress are much improved and the rate of pupil progress is increasing as a result. This success, demonstrates the school's satisfactory capacity for further improvement. It is due to the hard work of the staff and their close involvement with the local authority, which has provided much-needed help and support. To bring about further improvement, senior staff recognise that they must raise their expectations and set more challenging targets for improvement for themselves and for their pupils. Governors are proud of the school and have provided strong support through difficult times. The new chair of governors is determined to ensure that the improvement measures have maximum impact on pupil achievement.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

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

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?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
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	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
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

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

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	3
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

## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

21 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School, Wombourne, WV5 8DZ

My colleague and I really enjoyed our visit to your school. Thank you for being so helpful and friendly. I particularly enjoyed visiting your classrooms, seeing the work you were doing and talking to you about your school. I found that your school provides you with a satisfactory education and is an improving school.

Things I found out about your school

- You make satisfactory progress in your work and standards at the end of Year 6 are average.
- You behave well in school and take good care of each other. Generally, you enjoy your lessons and get on very well with your teachers.
- You are making better progress in your work, especially in writing and mathematics, because the teachers are giving you clearer advice about what you do well and what you need to do next to improve.
- You enjoy the good range of after-school activities which the school provides for you.
- You are friendly and self-confident because of the good care and support and positive encouragement you receive from the adults in school.
- The adults in school are feeling positive about the future development of the school and they are working hard to bring about improvements.

What I have asked the adults in school to do now

- Use the information they have about your achievements to make sure that the work they provide you with is always challenging enough, especially in the Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1.
- Set challenging targets for themselves and for you so that you can all make as much progress as possible, especially in writing and mathematics.
- Give you a greater range, and a better balance, of activities across all subjects.

You can help your teachers by continuing to work hard and behave well. I wish you the best of luck for the future.

Mr D Mason Lead Inspector

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Lead Inspector