

St Bernard's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109246
Local Authority	Bristol City of
Inspection number	356507
Inspection dates	14–15 July 2010
Reporting inspector	Christine Huard

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	139
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr A Tollerton
Headteacher	Adrian Wilson
Date of previous school inspection	13 February 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They observed 14 lessons or parts of lessons. Six teachers were observed teaching. Meetings were held with staff, governors, the school improvement partner and pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at some of the documentation. This included the school improvement plan, monitoring and assessment information as well as planning and governors' minutes of meetings. The school's procedures for ensuring pupils' safety were closely scrutinised. In addition, 62 parents' questionnaires were analysed as well as one returned by staff and 76 from pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- strategies used to raise standards across the school and improve progress in mathematics and writing
- how effectively information from assessments is used to ensure consistency of progress of pupils as they move through the school
- how successfully the curriculum develops pupils' independent learning skills and provides for links between subject areas
- how effectively subject leaders monitor and drive improvement.

Information about the school

St Bernard's Catholic Primary School serves an area on the outskirts of Bristol. Nearly all the pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average although the proportion of pupils with statements of special educational needs is above average. Most needs are related to learning or communication difficulties. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are catered for in the Reception class. The school has the Healthy School award and holds the Activemark.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

The school provides its pupils with a satisfactory education. Pupils make satisfactory progress in their learning and attain broadly average standards. However, until recently leadership and management were not sufficiently effective, with weaknesses in monitoring and evaluation of the school's work. This led to initiatives flagging and falling staff morale. The local authority has intervened to support the school over much of this academic year and as a result the school is now moving forward again. A rigorous review has resulted in an accurate self-evaluation of where the school is currently placed and the action plan for development is clear and indicates key priorities for improvement as well as how the work of the school is to be monitored by the headteacher, senior and middle leaders as well as governors. There is a renewed drive for improvement. This, combined with improving academic outcomes for pupils, demonstrates that the school has a satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

The school has successfully addressed weaknesses in mathematics. This is due to the subject leader making a careful analysis and finding that pupils were having too few opportunities to use their skills in problem solving and investigation. Ensuring that pupils have more planned opportunities for these activities has raised standards in mathematics across the whole school and pupils' attainment is now broadly average. A whole-school initiative to improve writing is also beginning to raise standards, particularly in classes lower down the school where previous underachievement is being addressed well.

Pupils behave well and they know how to keep themselves safe. They have a good understanding of how to maintain a healthy lifestyle. They make a satisfactory contribution to the school, local and international communities through participation in a range of events and through their awareness of those less fortunate than themselves. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall. Pupils are thoughtful and reflective and learn satisfactorily about different faiths and cultures. They have a sound awareness of cultural diversity in the United Kingdom.

Although teaching is satisfactory and much observed during the inspection was good, inconsistencies remain. This is because information from assessments is not always used to plan tasks which closely match the needs of all pupils in the class and there has been insufficient monitoring of lessons to identify, and then address, this issue. The curriculum was revised at the start of the year in order to update it and make it more creative and relevant for the pupils. This shows promise, although is not yet fully embedded in practice. The school cares for its pupils and tries to provide good support for them. Those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress in their academic development.

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Governors' monitoring has not been rigorous enough and they have not challenged the performance of the school sufficiently robustly. A new Chair has recently been appointed and has galvanised the governors into action. From the review, they now have a sound awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses, training is underway and a monitoring schedule drawn up. There has not yet been sufficient time for the impact of these changes to take effect.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen the leadership and management of the school by:
 - ensuring that monitoring and management of teaching and learning are more rigorous and focused closely on key priorities for development
 - ensuring middle leaders monitor their subjects and areas effectively to ensure consistency across the school
 - ensuring governors fully understand their roles in long-term planning, monitoring and challenging the school to remedy weaker areas of performance.
- Make sure that information from assessment is used more accurately to ensure that tasks are more closely matched to the needs of individuals and groups of pupils.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Pupils achieve satisfactorily and say they enjoy their learning. They listen attentively and participate well in lessons. They work well together in pairs and small groups and this was particularly evident in two lessons where pupils from Years 3 and 4 were designing and making sock puppets and later going on to write play scripts for them to perform. They have a good understanding of what living a healthy lifestyle entails, reflecting their Healthy School and Activemark awards, and have a very clear understanding of how to keep themselves safe. The school councillors are proud of their roles and older pupils explain how they play a role in the appointment of new staff and how this has been adapted over time to make it more effective. Pupils' attendance is broadly average and the school has a range of strategies in place to improve this further. The school particularly targets the very few persistent absentees and these efforts are beginning to meet with some success.

Pupils make satisfactory progress from their starting points in language, literacy and mathematical skills. Attainment in mathematics has improved significantly this year and English also shows some improvement in test results. Pupils' work in their books and in lessons shows that similar improvement is now occurring throughout the school, particularly in writing. The recently revised curriculum means that pupils are beginning to use their literacy skills more often in other subjects and this is one reason for the improvement. Progress in mathematics has improved because teachers are now matching learning tasks more closely to pupils' needs. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities benefit from individual and small group support. However, the impact of this support is not always monitored carefully enough. This means that

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although pupils make satisfactory progress, opportunities to improve at a faster rate are missed. Pupils' satisfactory academic progress and personal qualities prepare them appropriately for their future lives.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

The curriculum has many good features and was reviewed this year to make it more creative. As a result, topics relate more closely to pupils' interests and a range of visits and visitors serve to provide a more exciting learning environment for the pupils. However, as this is a new venture, planning is not yet complete. The school is currently working to ensure that meaningful links between subjects are made in each topic and where this is not possible, to ensure coverage is complete by planning to teach subjects discretely.

Teaching is satisfactory, but more effective teaching was observed in some classes. Questioning is often used well to assess how well pupils understand or to extend their thinking, but is too often targeted at pupils who put up their hands rather than those who do not. The revised curriculum ensures that pupils are really involved in their

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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learning. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 were very interested and motivated in their task of designing and making rain sticks. This provided them with good opportunities to share ideas with each other or in small groups. This sustained and increased the pace of their work. Procedures for assessing pupils' progress from term to term have been recently revised and make it easier for staff to identify where pupils may need extra support or extension. However, this is not yet fully effective. On a day-to-day basis the quality of marking is satisfactory. It is supportive, but does not systematically help pupils by identifying the next steps in their learning.

The care, guidance and support that the school provides are appreciated by most parents and carers. There are some very strong links with external agencies which underpin the good quality care for some pupils. Pupils say they feel well supported by staff. There are satisfactory arrangements in place for pupils when they enter and leave the school.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

Subject leaders have not yet had the opportunity to fully develop the monitoring aspect of their role and until very recently the monitoring of teaching and learning was weak. This is improving rapidly, but there is still work to do. All staff work hard to ensure equality of opportunity for all groups of pupils and eliminate discrimination. Staff and governors are conscientious in ensuring pupils' safety and health. Staff have received appropriate training to ensure they are able to deal with child protection issues should they arise. At the time of the inspection, safeguarding procedures had been very recently reviewed and updated and met statutory requirements. Newsletters provide parents and carers with appropriate information and as a result of a survey carried out by the governors an extra consultation evening has been recently introduced. Senior leaders and governors have a sound understanding of how the school contributes to community cohesion, although its monitoring of impact is largely informal. The school has good links with contrasting schools abroad although links within the United Kingdom are not quite so strong.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	4
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enjoy learning and make good progress because interesting themes make the curriculum relevant and appealing and teaching is lively and exciting. Tasks are planned which promote literacy, language, communication and numeracy skills well through a range of activities. These are often linked to the topic in progress and hold children's attention and motivate them well. As part of their seaside theme, children ran a beach cafe and sold ice cream and refreshments to their parents, giving them good opportunities to work with real money and practise early mathematical skills.

Children eagerly use computer games to effectively reinforce their learning. The outdoor environment is used well. It presents children with a wide range of learning opportunities reflecting the quality of the indoor learning area. Children have planted vegetables and fruit and enthusiastically tend their plants and track their growth. They learn to share and take turns. They develop independence and the ability to make choices. The care and attention given to children's welfare are good. Children's individual needs are known and acted upon and children feel safe and secure.

Leadership and management are good. Ongoing monitoring of the progress children are making ensures that activities are well matched to their needs on a day-to-day basis. Learning diaries are comprehensive and children's activities are recorded conscientiously; however, these do not always record the next stages in children's learning and what activities can lead on to. The 'seaside' book is a good way of celebrating each child's individual personality and skills and provides good opportunity for discussion about children's interests and outside activities.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Most parents are happy with the experiences their children have at the school. All feel that their children are kept safe, and a large majority think that teaching is good and that their children make good progress. A small minority have concerns about the leadership and management of the school. To an extent the inspectors would agree with their concerns as the school has not been monitoring its performance as well as it should have done, although with the help of the local authority this is being rectified. A few parents are concerned about behaviour. Inspectors accept that there have been problems in the past, but consider that behaviour in the school is now good, as a result of the strategies which have been put in place.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Bernard's Catholic Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	37	60	18	29	5	8	1	2
The school keeps my child safe	35	56	24	39	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	25	40	27	44	9	15	1	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	29	47	24	39	6	10	2	3
The teaching is good at this school	31	50	24	39	5	8	1	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	22	35	33	53	2	3	4	6
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	25	40	34	55	3	5	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	23	37	28	45	7	11	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	27	44	25	40	5	8	2	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	21	34	30	48	7	11	3	5
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	21	34	32	52	8	13	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	17	27	32	52	9	15	4	6
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	30	48	25	40	5	8	1	2

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



16 July 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Bernard's Catholic Primary School, Bristol BS11 9TU

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. You were really polite and friendly and helped us to learn a lot about what you do and what you enjoy. Your school gives you a satisfactory education and is getting better.

What we found out about your school

- It is a friendly and happy place in which to work and play.
- You enjoy coming to school and behave well.
- You achieve the standards you should in English, mathematics and science.
- You show a good understanding of how to live healthily and how to stay safe
- You benefit from some interesting visits and visitors.
- Your headteacher and teachers are working hard to help you do better

What we have asked your school to do now

- We want your governors, and all those leaders and teachers responsible for subjects, to check on the work of the school and the progress you make in different subjects much more carefully.
- We would like teachers to use information from marking and assessing your work better to ensure that tasks are really well matched to your abilities

We are sure that you will do all you can to help all adults who work with you make your school even better. You can do this by trying as hard as you can in lessons.

Yours sincerely

Christine Huard

Lead Inspector

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