

# St Bernadette Catholic VA Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	109254
<b>Local authority</b>	Bristol
<b>Inspection number</b>	377895
<b>Inspection dates</b>	24–25 January 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	John Carnaghan

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>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	210
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Nancy Thomas
<b>Headteacher</b>	Barbara Lee
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	10 May 2007
<b>School address</b>	Gladstone Road Hengrove Bristol BS14 9LP
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<b>Email address</b>	head.st.bernadette.p@bristol.gov.uk

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	24–25 January 2012
<b>Inspection number</b>	377895



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## Introduction

Inspection team

John Carnaghan

Additional inspector

Mary Usher-Clark

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two day's notice. Inspectors investigated pupils' current progress and the consistency of teaching, observing 15 lessons taught by seven teachers. They held meetings with pupils, staff and members of the governing body. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at its records, policies, documents, assessments and the questionnaires returned by 117 parents and carers.

## Information about the school

St Bernadette Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School is of average size for a primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. Most pupils are White British; there is a smaller than average proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups who are learning to speak English as an additional language, but these numbers are rising. The proportion of pupils who are disabled or with special educational needs is below average. The school meets the current government floor standard.

## Inspection judgements

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>3</b>

## Key findings

- This is a satisfactory school. It is improving, as initiatives introduced by new leaders and managers over the last two years take effect.
- The attainment of pupils as they leave school is average. Better teaching in Years 4 to 6 is improving progress for current Key Stage 2 pupils. However, given pupils' starting points, achievement is satisfactory. The close attention given to pupils facing barriers to learning ensures all groups of pupils achieve equally.
- Children make a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Consistently effective teaching ensures good progress.
- Pupils are generally respectful and show positive attitudes to learning. Behaviour is often exemplary, and is good overall despite occasional lapses when teaching is less engaging. Pupils' safety is paramount and robust procedures assure this.
- There are strengths in teaching but it is inconsistent. Most lessons are well planned and pupils are enthusiastic learners. However, in a few lessons expectations of work and behaviour are not always as high as they should be, and the pace of learning can sometimes slow. Most pupils have clear targets for improvement in literacy, but marking does not always offer good advice.
- Leaders, managers and the governing body work well together to promote improvements. Assessment information is used to set appropriate expectations and targets for staff and pupils. Self-evaluation provides a clear picture of the school; the monitoring of teaching has improved practice, but has not always been rigorous enough to iron out all of the inconsistencies.
- The curriculum is being developed to meet pupils' needs and enthusiasms; new topics are improving boys' engagement with learning. The school promotes pupils' spiritual development exceptionally well; pupils develop a good capacity for reflection and empathy.

Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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

- Improve achievement across the school by:
  - ensuring that teaching has greater consistency across all year groups, that lessons have high expectations and good pace, that any off-task behaviour is firmly managed and that pupils understand how to improve their work
  - develop the curriculum so that it provides more engaging opportunities for all pupils, especially boys, to learn.
- Build on current monitoring activities to ensure a sharper focus on promoting high standards of teaching and learning.

## Main report

### Achievement of pupils

The attainment of pupils by the time they leave school is average. The school places a high priority on using assessment information to identify groups of pupils in danger of under performance. Rapid remedial actions prevent most of these variations from becoming significant trends. A mixture of intervention activities, carefully tailored to needs, ensures that pupils who are disabled and those with special educational needs progress as well as their peers. The needs of the small number of pupils who speak English as an additional language are quickly identified and acted upon, enabling this group to make similar progress to their peers. However, boys' attainment, although still broadly average, has lagged behind that of girls. Recent curriculum innovations have led to boys' greater engagement in their learning and the attainment gap is currently closing.

Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage because of the consistently strong focus on teaching important literacy and numeracy skills and a well-planned, stimulating curriculum. Many learn good reading and writing skills very quickly and children develop good learning habits, enjoying working and playing, independently and with adults. Year 2 and Year 6 pupils have average reading skills; most read expressively and enjoy selecting stories and non-fiction books. Older pupils take pleasure in reading, tackling difficult words with confidence, applying their understanding of the author and text.

Pupils' learning in the classroom is enhanced by their generally positive attitudes to their work. Typically, Year 1 pupils responded very well to the teacher's cheerful demands to meet tight deadlines as they worked through addition and subtraction problems. The teacher's sympathetic and precise analysis of pupils' errors developed their understanding of the right techniques to employ when tackling tricky problems.

Progress in Key Stages 1 and 2 is satisfactory overall; it is better in Years 4 to 6 where teaching is more challenging and sets higher expectations. There is evidence that pupils' progress is starting to improve as weaknesses in teaching are addressed. Parents and carers' positive views on pupils' progress tend to reflect this. Given their starting points, the achievement of all groups of pupils is satisfactory.

## Quality of teaching

Parents and carers expressed no concerns about teaching at the school. However, teaching across the school is inconsistent and this has an impact on pupils' progress over time. For example, although good teaching is slowly improving progress in the top three years of the school, the legacy of slower progress at younger ages hampers developments to move attainment from currently average levels.

Most lessons have considerable strengths. They are well planned to build learning on previous understanding and teachers question pupils very perceptively to check their learning. Interactive whiteboards are often used creatively to ensure the pace of lessons is good and teachers' explanations are crystal clear. Relationships in classrooms are usually very positive and behaviour can be excellent; in these circumstances pupils are keen to learn and concentrate very well. A Key Stage 2 guided reading session demonstrated many strengths. Pupils were challenged to read an article very quickly as the words sped across the interactive whiteboard and were then closely questioned by the teacher to check their understanding. Excellent questioning encouraged pupils to use the appropriate vocabulary when responding, developing their speaking and listening skills, for example some starting their answers with, 'I would like to elaborate...'. Teaching promotes spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. A good religious education lesson where a Christian marriage ceremony was re-enacted prompted interesting discussions of the qualities of a good marriage.

On the few occasions when teaching is less effective, expectations are too low, there is a lack of deadlines and the pace of learning deteriorates. Sometimes low-level chatter develops and there is occasional disruption; some pupils report their frustration as the management of certain boys' behaviour takes too long and learning is interrupted. The school has made progress in helping pupils understand their learning. All have very clear literacy targets but this is less consistent in numeracy. Marking is frequently very helpful and pupils in some classes know they should write replies to teachers' questions and heed their advice. However, this is not universal and some marking is brief and does not offer clear enough guidance.

## Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils are respectful, well mannered, caring of one another and typically have good attitudes to learning. They enjoy school, attend well and are punctual. Pupils demonstrate a strong concern for the world's resources and the people in it. Good behaviour and harmonious relationships are the norm in lessons and on the playground; pupils play actively and enjoy their new play equipment. All groups report that bullying is rare and when it occurs is non violent; pupils understand that the school takes such incidents very seriously and deals with them well.

Pupils, parents and carers almost all regard behaviour as good. This is a well-ordered, safe school and pupils make a significant contribution, for example acting as health and safety 'officers' and play leaders. Pupils take up numerous responsibilities from an early age, such as showing adults around the building, and the school develops their independence very well. The school pays close attention to

safeguarding and meets all requirements. The curriculum keeps pupils well informed about potential dangers whether it is on the internet or the busy local roads.

Where teaching fails to engage interest and behaviour management falters, there are pockets of low-level disruption (mainly from boys) and classrooms can become too noisy. This is far from the norm and most lessons are characterised by positive attitudes and an enthusiasm for learning.

## **Leadership and management**

Leaders and managers share an ambition to improve the school and raise achievement. They recognise the need to improve the capacity of all staff to participate in school development and provide good opportunities for staff training. Close partnerships with other schools offer opportunities to observe best practice. The school analyses assessment data thoroughly and has an up-to-date view of each pupil's progress. This information is used judiciously to identify those needing extra support, ensuring good equality of opportunity. Leaders, managers and the governing body use assessment information to prioritise issues in school improvement plans. Governing body members are well informed and play their part by acting as critical friends and promoting school improvement. The school has made progress tackling weaknesses, so boys' achievement is improving, and teaching, while inconsistent, is beginning to deliver better progress. Plans and essential systems are fully established for the school to continue to move forwards. All of this confirms the school's satisfactory capacity for improvement.

Assessment data are used to hold staff to account for pupils' progress but, as this is relatively recent, has not fully eliminated inconsistencies in lessons. Teaching is regularly observed and strengths and weaknesses identified. However, the follow up to concerns is not always sufficiently rigorous to build teachers' skills and to eliminate weaknesses. For example, while most pupils benefit from clear literacy targets, this is not consistently backed by regular, analytical marking of work.

The curriculum is satisfactory. However, it is an area of growing success. The school has recognised the need to provide opportunities to engage boys' interest so that, for example, they use interesting projects as a stimulus for writing. As more creative opportunities are offered, boys' attainment improves; the school plans to build on this to match the curriculum even more closely to pupils' needs and interests.

Provision for pupils' spiritual development is outstanding and there are regular opportunities in lessons and assemblies for reflection on the profound aspects of the human condition. Moral, social and cultural development is well promoted.

Views of parents and carers indicate that many are closely engaged with their children's development, one typically writing, 'When I have concerns, I have found the headteacher to be very approachable and she appears to act on concerns raised.' Safeguarding arrangements are rigorous and the school punctiliously follows up absences, promoting attendance that is above average.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**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.**



26 January 2012

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of St Bernadette Catholic VA Primary School, Bristol BS14 9LP**

Many thanks for the warm welcome you gave to the inspectors when we recently visited the school. We both enjoyed talking to you and thought you were very courteous.

Your school provides you with a satisfactory education. You are making satisfactory progress and your attainment by the end of Year 6 is similar to that of other pupils of this age across the country. Inspectors agree with your view that behaviour is good, although not always, as some pupils occasionally disturb lessons. Teaching is satisfactory but varies in quality, much of it is good and helps you learn well, but a few lessons have room for improvement. The school provides excellent opportunities for your spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Your headteacher and other staff are working hard to make improvements but know that there is still work to be done to make the school even better.

We have asked the school to:

- help you do even better by making sure that you learn more quickly and the work is not too easy, and also to plan your learning so that it is more interesting and helps you to do well
- ensure that senior leaders check that this is happening.

You can help by making sure you behave well in all of your lessons. Once again, many thanks for your help.

Yours sincerely

John Carnaghan  
Lead inspector

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