

St Bernadette Catholic Junior School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	100628
Local authority	Lambeth
Inspection number	376430
Inspection dates	6–7 February 2012
Lead inspector	David Radomsky

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 of pupils on the school roll	243
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Christopher Basden
Headteacher	Deborah Hogan
Date of previous school inspection	11 June 2009
School address	Atkins Road Clapham Park London SW12 0AB
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Age group	7-11
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Introduction

Inspection team

David Radomsky

Additional inspector

Angela Konarzewski

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 13 lessons taught by 11 teachers. In addition, inspectors made short observations of six small group support sessions. Discussions were held with parents and carers, with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. Inspectors took account of the responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work and looked at school documentation, including teachers' planning, the school development plan, assessment information, safeguarding policies and samples of pupils' work. Some of the observations and work sampling were carried out jointly with the headteacher. In addition, inspectors listened to pupils read and talked with them about their enjoyment of books. Inspectors analysed 132 questionnaires from parents and carers, 29 from staff and 102 from pupils.

Information about the school

St Bernadette Catholic Junior is an average-sized school. The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and for those who speak English as an additional language are well above average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is larger than average. Most of this group have moderate learning difficulties. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The school has many accreditations, including the Inclusion Quality Mark and has become an accredited Open Central Network (OCN) centre, delivering adult training. Since the previous inspection, there has been a considerable turnover of staff, and since September 2011, new middle leaders took up their posts. In January 2011, the school formed a soft federation with a local infant school. The school meets the current floor standards.

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	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	3

Key findings

- This is a satisfactory school. Pupils’ achievement is satisfactory and their attainment is broadly average by the end of Year 6. Gaps in achievement between groups in the school and similar groups nationally are narrowing.
- All stakeholders are very proud of their school and the strong sense of community engendered by its welcoming and inclusive ethos. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about all aspects of the school’s work. They, and the pupils themselves, confirm that pupils feel very safe, behave well and develop very positive attitudes towards learning.
- Most of the teaching is satisfactory and sometimes it is good. Planning does not always take into account the full range of pupils’ needs and this slows their rates of progress. Marking does not consistently guide pupils on how to improve their work, nor are sufficient opportunities given to pupils to respond and follow up on teachers’ comments and learn from their mistakes.
- The school promotes pupils’ spiritual, moral and social development well and enriches pupils’ experiences through visits, such as to art galleries, places of worship and the theatre. Pupils develop good social skills and gain greatly in confidence and self-esteem.
- Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school is making a concerted effort to improve following the dip in attainment in 2011, especially in mathematics. Systems are in place for tracking pupils’ achievement and for supporting those who are not meeting expectations, but this information is not used rigorously and regularly enough by all teachers and leaders to accelerate progress. Planning identifies appropriate priorities for improvement, but plans do not detail specific measurable success criteria for raising attainment further. The governing body is very well informed but does not directly monitor the school’s work sufficiently in order to challenge leaders to rapidly bring about sustained improvements.

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

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By January 2013, improve the overall quality of teaching from satisfactory to good or better by:
 - ensuring that the learning activities provide appropriate challenge for all pupils and that learning proceeds at a good pace
 - improving the quality of marking so that pupils understand what they must do to improve their work, and ensure that they are given sufficient opportunities to respond to their teacher’s comments.
- Develop leadership, management and governance by:
 - improving development plans to make clearer links between actions and expected, measurable gains in pupils’ progress
 - ensuring that monitoring by subject leaders is rigorous, regular and focuses sharply on pupils’ learning
 - ensuring that the governing body holds the school to account through increased direct monitoring, and challenge and support for all leaders.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils’ achievement is satisfactory and their attainment is broadly average by the end of Year 6. The vast majority of parents and carers feel that their children make good progress. However, national test data, the school’s own analysis of current performance and observations of learning in lessons confirm that pupils’ progress is satisfactory much of the time. Sometimes, they make good progress when learning is well planned to match pupils’ abilities and proceeds at a good pace. In Year 6, for example, a mathematics lesson rapidly engaged all pupils in developing learning through trial and error. Pupils were continually set ever more challenging open-ended questions and through their strong collaboration with each other were able to arrive at and justify their answers. These kind of suitably challenging activities for all pupils and well-paced learning are not yet the norm across the school.

In the year following the previous inspection, pupils made rapid progress and attainment was high. However, this was not replicated in 2011 owing to significant turbulence in staffing, and attainment in English and mathematics was broadly average. Achievement for some groups of pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, and for pupils who speak English is an additional language, was less strong than their peers. The school is narrowing the gaps between the achievement of these groups rapidly owing to more stable staffing and through the wide range of additional support strategies it has in place. While in English, the proportion of pupils attaining the higher Level 5 was below national levels, attainment in reading by the end of Year 6 was above average. This is because pupils are encouraged and well supported to read regularly at school and at

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home.

Quality of teaching

Most parents and carers feel that the quality of teaching is good. The inspection found that, although there is some good teaching, the majority of teaching is satisfactory. It results in pupils currently in the school making progress that is broadly in line with that made by pupils nationally.

When teaching is at its best, teachers plan for the learning needs of all pupils; they set a good pace and extend thinking through effective questioning. They ensure that learning is fun and explain clearly to pupils what they will learn and how they will know if they have succeeded. There are strong relationships, and teachers and teaching assistants interact well, giving high-quality support enabling all to make good progress. For instance, in a Year 3 English lesson, pupils had just returned from a PE lesson and so the teacher used the opportunity to get pupils to read an article, discuss it in pairs and think about how they could contribute to a PE-related carnival. They enjoyed this activity as they could relate to it well and they successfully expanded their sports-related vocabulary. They went on to answer different comprehension questions targeted to their individual abilities so that all engaged well in their writing.

Pupils' work, assessment data and lesson observations during the inspection confirmed teaching is more typically satisfactory. Teachers often miss opportunities to provide a sufficient range of learning activities appropriate for the full range of pupils' abilities. As a result, pupils' learning and progress are slower than in the more successful lessons. In some classes, the homework set is not targeted well enough to extend learning. Similarly, marking does not consistently make explicit what pupils need to do to improve their work and reach the next level. In addition, in many cases, teachers do not ensure that pupils follow up on their comments and correct their mistakes.

The impact of the planned curriculum in terms of basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics is satisfactory. However, there are insufficient opportunities planned for pupils to practise and apply the literacy and numeracy skills they learn in English and mathematics lessons in other subjects. The curriculum has a good impact on pupils' personal development through the wide range of opportunities it plans, for example the adventurous activities undertaken on residential trips. Whether creating art work inspired by Aboriginal paintings, communal singing, reflection in assemblies or lessons on moral issues such as on the importance of forgiveness, all have a good impact on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Inspectors found the pupils to be unfailingly polite and welcoming, emulating the excellent role models of the adults in the school. A very large majority of parents and carers believe that their children are safe and that behaviour is good, both during

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lessons and as pupils move around the school. Good behaviour was evident in lessons, assembly and playtimes observed during the inspection. The behaviour of pupils and the positive attitudes they demonstrate in lessons are major reasons why pupils are making at least satisfactory and sometimes good progress. As one pupil said, 'I enjoy lessons as each day I learn more.' Behaviour does, however, dip on the few occasions when the quality of teaching is weaker and fails to engage pupils' interest.

Pupils feel very safe and believe that bullying is rare. They are confident that incidents of misbehaviour will be dealt with swiftly. The school has effective systems for promoting good behaviour through both rewards and sanctions. Pupils say these are applied consistently and are effective in helping pupils with behavioural difficulties to improve their social skills and interactions with others. Pupils know that bullying can take many forms. They can explain clearly about the dangers of cyber-bullying, a point which was strongly reinforced at an assembly during the inspection to mark internet safety week.

Leadership and management

The headteacher is highly regarded by the school community and, together with the governing body, has a clear, ambitious vision for the future. The school is successfully emerging with renewed strength from a period of very challenging staffing issues. Morale is high and staff are keen to move the school forward. Since the previous inspection, overall achievement has risen, although it declined in 2011. Inspection evidence confirms the school's view that actions taken to improve attainment for all groups, especially in mathematics, for the current Year 6 cohort is proving successful. Attendance has improved year on year since the previous inspection and is now high. This demonstrates that the capacity for sustained improvement is satisfactory.

The school development plan identifies appropriate priorities and actions to bring about improvement. Plans do not, however, identify clearly the intended impact actions will have on pupils' learning and this hampers a more rapid rate of improvement. The governing body is supportive of the work of the school. It understands what needs to be done in order to take the school forward but does not consistently hold all leaders to account for school performance. Senior leaders support teachers well through a programme of classroom observation and professional development. A number of subject leaders are new in post and are developing the skills necessary to fulfil their role. They, and experienced subject leaders, are not sufficiently involved in monitoring and evaluating the impact of initiatives regularly enough within the classroom and this slows the rate of improvement.

Leaders ensure that all pupils are now achieving as well as each other, and they promote equality of opportunity and tackle any discrimination effectively. For example, the school works with the Children's Country Holiday Fund (CCHF) to ensure those pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable have opportunities

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to experience holidays away from home with their peers.

Overall, the curriculum is broad and balanced, enabling pupils to develop their literacy and numeracy skills appropriately. The school identified the need to make the curriculum more creative and hence has begun to pilot aspects of other curriculum models, it is too soon, however, to judge the impact of this development on pupils' achievement. Well-planned enrichment activities such as the International Evening, a wide range of visits and after-school clubs, as well as the harmonious relationships evident in the school, ensure that provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. As one parent told inspectors, 'The way the school allows the children to develop their ideas by setting up and running lunchtime clubs, talent shows and so on is truly enabling, and supports the development of the whole child.'

Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are robust and fully meet statutory requirements. Staff are well trained in child protection procedures and all adults are thoroughly vetted before working in school.

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).

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.



9 February 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Bernadette Catholic Junior School, London SW12 0AB

Thank you for the warm welcome that you gave us when we visited your school. We greatly enjoyed talking to many of you and listening to some of you read. We think your school is satisfactory, which means some things are done well and others could be better. Here are some of the good things we found out.

Your headteacher, staff and governing body ensure that you are well cared for and supported, and they want to help you to achieve the best you can. You clearly enjoy school and we were very impressed with your good behaviour, friendliness towards each other and the respect that you show towards adults. Your parents and carers must be very proud of you. You understand how to stay safe and you enjoy working with other pupils in your lessons. The school provides you with many enjoyable and fun learning opportunities including many trips.

The leaders of your school want you to achieve well and do your very best. They know what needs to be done next and, from our findings, we have asked them to do some things to improve your school. The teachers are going to make sure your lessons are even more exciting and plan activities that will help you to do your best. They will make sure that you know how to improve your work when they mark your books, and will give you time to correct your mistakes and learn from them. School leaders and the governing body are going to check that the school is doing its very best to make sure that you are successful in all that you do.

All of you can contribute to these improvements by working hard and responding well to all that the teachers ask you to do.

We wish you all the best for the future and thank you again for your help.

Yours sincerely

David Radomsky
Lead inspector

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