

St Bernard's RC Primary School Manchester

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105541
Local authority	Manchester
Inspection number	377260
Inspection dates	21–22 March 2012
Lead inspector	Vanessa MacDonald

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	330
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	James Walsh
Headteacher	Patrick Gallagher
Date of previous school inspection	3 July 2007
School address	Burnage Lane Burnage Manchester M19 1DR
Telephone number	0161 4327635
Fax number	0161 4328738
Email address	head@st-bernards.manchester.sch.uk



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



Introduction

Inspection team

Vanessa MacDonald
Maria McGarry
Patricia Cope

Additional inspector
Additional inspector
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 19 lessons or part-lessons taught by 13 different teachers. The inspectors listened to pupils from two different year groups reading, and talked with them and other groups of pupils about their lessons and school life. In addition, inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, a parent support adviser and members of the governing body. The inspectors observed the school's work and scrutinised documentation relating to pupils' progress and to school management, including the arrangements to ensure safeguarding. They also analysed 138 questionnaires received from parents and carers and those completed by staff and pupils.

Information about the school

St Bernard's is a larger than average size primary school. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage and the percentage of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below the national average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above the national average. The proportion of pupils who are disabled and those who have special educational needs is in line with the national average overall, though an above average proportion has a statement of special educational needs. The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for attainment and progress. The school has gained Healthy School status, Active Schools award, International Schools award and a curriculum award for PE in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Since the previous inspection, there have been significant changes in staffing at all levels and marked improvements to premises with a new entrance to the school, improved accommodation for the Early Years Foundations Stage and to the outdoor learning environments.

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

Key Findings

- This is a good school. It is a happy and welcoming place where pupils are cared for well. The school is not outstanding because there are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching in mathematics and not enough teaching is outstanding.
- Leadership and management, including governors, are of a good quality and adopt a collaborative approach to continuous school improvement. They monitor and develop the quality of teaching effectively, with performance well-managed to drive improvement. The curriculum is good, providing pupils with a broad and stimulating range of experiences.
- Achievement is good. Children get off to a good start and make good progress during their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Teaching and provision in the nursery are outstanding and a particular strength of the school. Pupils achieve well throughout Key Stages 1 and 2, reaching above average attainment at the end of Year 6. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make progress which is in line with that of their peers. Achievement in mathematics is not as strong as it is in English.
- Teaching is good overall. There are examples of outstanding teaching. Most lessons are well-organised, have good pace and activities motivate and engage the pupils well. Teaching assistants provide effective support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. However, there are inconsistencies in mathematics teaching relating to the accurate matching of tasks to pupils' needs and the quality of feedback to help pupils improve further.
- Behaviour is consistently good. Pupils treat each other and adults with respect and consideration. Parents and carers who replied to the questionnaire think highly of the school. Bullying of any kind and racial incidents are very rare and dealt with promptly and effectively. Attendance has improved in recent years and is now above the average for primary schools.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further accelerate progress and raise attainment in mathematics by improving the quality of teaching so that it is at least consistently good and more is outstanding by ensuring that:
 - activities and work set in lessons are matched closely to pupils' different abilities, taking full account of prior learning and assessment information
 - there is consistency in marking and assessing pupils' work.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning. They are attentive, enthusiastic and keen to do well, working hard in lessons to achieve good outcomes. Pupils demonstrate cooperation when working in pairs and small groups and when supporting others and they contribute their ideas confidently.

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skill levels which are generally well below those typically expected for their age and they make good progress. They settle quickly in a warm and welcoming environment. There is a strong focus on developing children's language skills, which sets firm foundations for future reading and writing development. Pupils make good progress, and their attainment by the end of Year 6, is above the national average. Robust tracking information shows that pupils in all cohorts make good progress and there is no significant difference between different groups. Across the school, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because of the effective and well-planned support they receive.

Attainment in reading is consistently above average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6, and is a strength of the school. The teaching of sounds and letters is good and children in the nursery get off to an excellent start. For example, children were actively engaged in a wide range of activities during a phonics (the sounds that letters make) session which was adapted to their needs and enabled them to practise their language and writing skills very effectively. This approach was applied consistently by all staff. Pupils become fluent readers as they progress through school and the older ones have a good knowledge of books and authors, and can express clear reasons for their preferences.

Progress in mathematics, although good overall, is not as strong as it is in English. This is because teaching does not always use assessment information or closely match activities to pupils' needs accurately enough. Leaders have already identified the teaching of mathematics as an area for improvement and some actions have been implemented. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly satisfied with the progress their children are making and pupils also feel they are making good progress. Inspection findings concur with these positive views.

Quality of teaching

Teaching is good with some that is outstanding. Teachers establish very positive relationships with their pupils. Activities are interesting, promote pupils' application of literacy and numeracy skills well and make increasingly effective links between different subjects. Inspectors agree with parents' and carers' overwhelmingly positive view that their children are taught well at the school.

In the Nursery class, teaching and provision are outstanding. In one session, children were actively engaged in responding enthusiastically to sorting and matching numbers, including two-digit numbers, and linking them to the right house. All children were encouraged and challenged, ensuring that progress was at a good pace.

Good teaching is characterised by lessons that are well-planned and adapted for the different abilities of groups. Links between subjects made within topic work help to capture pupils' interest, particularly in English. Teachers consistently share learning objectives and lessons progress at a good pace. They make good use of questioning to help pupils develop and explain their thinking and pupils are able to work well both independently and collaboratively. Interactive whiteboards are used in each class to support teaching, and pupils' information and communication technology skills (ICT) are given a boost through the use of netbooks. Teaching assistants provide effective support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, managing group and one-to-one teaching effectively.

Plans are matched well for different groups and pupils are able to use and apply their skills to cross-curricular contexts, which engage and motivate them highly effectively. For example, in two Year 3 and 4 lessons, pupils were enthused by creating similes, metaphors and personification using their good knowledge about the rainforest to create their own poems.

There are some inconsistencies in the teaching of mathematics and the school's key leaders are working to eradicate these by, for example, sharing best practice. Where teaching is stronger, particularly in English, pupils are challenged consistently at an appropriate level and teachers intervene appropriately to move all pupils' learning on. In English, marking is consistent, giving pupils good indications of what they need to do to improve their work. However, in mathematics, activities are not always sufficiently well-matched to pupils' needs because the use of assessment information, marking and the application of next steps in their learning are not applied as consistently. This prevents some pupils from making accelerated progress.

Pupils are enabled to work in different groups, have the opportunity to work cooperatively with others, and to support others in their learning very effectively. This, and the strong relationships between adults and pupils, makes a valuable contribution to pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' good attitudes to learning were evident in lessons throughout the inspection, even when the pace of learning sometimes slowed. School records show that behaviour over time has given little cause for concern. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. The majority of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire were strongly positive about behaviour. Pupils have a similar view but a small number of pupils say that behaviour is not always good, though it has little or no effect on their work in classrooms.

Pupils have a range of responsibilities including mediators, play leaders and 'special friends' and have been involved in making decisions relating to improvements such as outdoor activities. All staff promote and manage behaviour effectively with sports coaches being used well at lunchtime. The school's strong ethos and values are integral and pupils respond to them willingly. The school has a very good knowledge of its pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. The Parent Support Adviser supports pupils and families very effectively.

Strong relationships between adults and pupils are evident in lessons and around the school. Pupils show good levels of collaboration and all groups, socialise and work together well. As a result, all forms of bullying are rare and the school has clear and effective procedures for tackling bullying, if it occurs. Pupils have a good appreciation that bullying can take many different forms, such as verbal and name-calling. Pupils enjoy being at school and the recent and concerted effort has improved attendance so that it is now above average. They are provided with opportunities to understand how they can keep themselves and others safe, including the potential dangers of using new technologies. All parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire believe that their children feel safe at school. Typical comments were 'All the children seem to be happy and secure'.

Leadership and management

Senior leaders and managers, including the governing body, have a clear vision for the school, which is shared by all staff. The governing body is well informed, provides good support and holds the school to account well. Since the previous inspection, the school has improved standards in reading and writing at Key Stage 1 and made considerable improvements to the school's accommodation. Performance-management is effective and training needs are clearly identified and closely linked to school priorities. There is a good capacity to improve further.

Senior leaders use extensive data to track pupils' progress accurately and to identify where action needs to be taken to ensure improvement. Self-evaluation is accurate, focused on clearly defined priorities which are identified through rigorous monitoring of teaching. Leaders at all levels are involved in monitoring and subject leaders are developing their roles further, working together to map key skills and assessment opportunities in different subjects. The curriculum is good and pupils enjoy the links between subjects in Key Stage 2. Creative arts are a strength, the standard of art and display is high, with pupils visibly enthralled by the rainforest 'tunnel' display they had to walk through.

Through partnerships both locally and globally pupils are able to talk about diversity and cultural differences. They have an opportunity to attend a spiritual retreat and a residential. These make a valuable contribution to pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The curriculum is further enhanced by visits, visitors and a wide range of extra-curricular activities. It promotes equality of opportunity well through effective tracking which means that any gaps in performance are quickly identified and learning opportunities provided that enable all groups of pupils to achieve well. Discrimination is not tolerated. Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements and are given a high priority, with training that is always kept up to date.

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 up 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.
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.



23 March 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Bernard's RC Primary School Manchester, Manchester, M19 1DR

Thank you for talking to us and helping us when we visited your school recently. We thoroughly enjoyed talking to some of you, hearing some of you read and seeing how much you enjoy your lessons, playtime and lunchtime with your friends. Your views and questionnaire responses tell us that the overwhelming majority of you are very happy with all aspects of school life. You go to a good school.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage get off to a really good start. While you make good progress in English and mathematics through the rest of the school, your progress is not quite as good in mathematics as it is in English. Your behaviour and attendance are good and the teaching is of good quality. You thoroughly enjoy the many interesting activities arranged for you. Your headteacher and all the school's leaders lead the school well and are determined to keep on improving your school.

However, I have asked the headteacher, staff and governors to help you make even better progress in mathematics, by making sure that what you are taught matches what you need to learn more closely. Also teachers' marking should help you understand what you should do next to improve.

I hope you will play your part by continuing to work hard and to do your best to make your school even better.

Yours sincerely

Vanessa MacDonald
Lead Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone **0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.**