

St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116391
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	357953
Inspection dates	11–12 July 2011
Reporting inspector	Keith Sadler

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	322
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Judith Moore
Headteacher	Jo Riglar
Date of previous school inspection	26 March 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors, who observed 20 lessons led by 14 different teachers and practitioners. The inspectors held meetings with members of the governing body, staff, parents and carers and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation. This included the school's analysis of pupils' progress, teachers' lesson plans, the school improvement plan, leaders' monitoring records and pupils' work. Questionnaires from staff and from 108 parents and carers and pupils in Key Stage 2 were analysed and their responses taken into account.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The strength of pupils' progress in mathematics in Years 3 to 6, and whether current Year 6 pupils are on track to attain their targets.
- How well more-able pupils progress in their learning.
- Whether the pace of learning is sufficiently brisk.
- The impact of the role played by teachers with particular responsibilities in the school's monitoring and evaluation procedures.

Information about the school

St Bernadette's is bigger than most primary schools. It is heavily oversubscribed and takes its pupils mostly from the Catholic pastoral area of north east Hampshire, though a few travel from outside this area. The large majority of the pupils are of White British heritage, though the proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well above the national average. These pupils are from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is broadly at the national average. There are a few pupils at an early stage of learning English. The proportion known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average, as is the proportion identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school provides breakfast and after-school care for pupils, which is managed by the governing body.

The school has gained a number of awards, including Healthy School status and recognition by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) as a Rights Respecting School.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

St Bernadette's is a good school which has improved in a number of respects since the previous inspection. The school is a happy and friendly community where pupils feel exceptionally safe and have total confidence in the adults who care for them. This is because the care, guidance and support provided by them are outstanding. Throughout the school, pupils behave well, are polite and show positive attitudes to learning. Senior staff are determined that the pupils should play an important role in the running of their school. Hence, pupils' contribution to the school and also the local community is exceptionally strong and there are many ways in which the pupils' voice is represented. Pupils delight in taking responsibility, for example through membership of the many committees that operate to run the school. They even accompany members of the governing body and staff in routine health and safety checks around the school. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and emotional development is outstanding, and by the time they reach Year 6, pupils develop into mature and responsible young people who are prepared well for their move to secondary school.

Children get off to an excellent start in the Reception classes because outstanding provision enables them to settle quickly and make rapid progress in their learning. In the past, progress was seldom better than satisfactory in Years 1 to 6, with resulting standards being below average. This is no longer the case because the quality of teaching has improved and is now consistently good. Staff manage the pupils well and they usually provide interesting and engaging activities that are matched well to the pupils' needs. On occasion, teachers spend too long introducing lessons and this means that the pace of learning drops. Nonetheless, in a large majority of lessons pupils learn well in all year groups. In consequence, achievement is good and by the time they reach Year 6, pupils' attainment is significantly above average in English and science. In mathematics, attainment is above average but not yet higher because their skills in applying their good levels of mathematical knowledge in practical mathematical investigations are no better than satisfactory.

A successful emphasis on strengthening teachers' skills in the assessment of learning has enabled staff to ensure that lesson activities are suitably demanding for all groups of pupils. However, there are some inconsistencies and the school rightly has a target to make sure assessment procedures are consistently embedded across all classes. The school is particularly successful in supporting pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The many pupils who speak English as an additional language also make good progress. Provision for these pupils is good.

The headteacher's effective leadership has been pivotal in the school's improved effectiveness. She is supported well by senior staff and the governing body, who share a

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deep commitment to further improvement. Robust monitoring and evaluation procedures have been developed. These help leaders to check regularly on how well the pupils are doing and hold staff to account for their progress. These good features underpin the school's good capacity to secure further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Lift the quality of teaching and learning from good to outstanding by:
 - ensuring that the pace of learning is consistently brisk, particularly by ensuring that lesson introductions are not too long
 - increasing opportunities for pupils to strengthen their investigational and practical mathematics skills
 - embedding the good assessment for learning procedures across all classes.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils enjoy learning. All groups respond enthusiastically to the interesting activities that teachers provide, and as a result they sustain their concentration well. In almost all lessons seen during the inspection, progress was good. These findings support the school's comprehensive data and pupils' current work, which show that all groups of pupils make good progress and achieve well. In a typical good quality Year 5/6 mathematics lesson in which pupils were studying square numbers, the teacher produced a real-life problem - for Montezuma the Aztec emperor to build a step pyramid from squares. The pupils made good progress as they built the pyramid layer by layer. Current Year 6 pupils are on track to attain their challenging targets in English and also in mathematics, although their arithmetical knowledge is stronger than their problem solving skills. Because good attention has been given to extending the achievement of more-able pupils, the number of pupils on course to gaining the higher National Curriculum levels, particularly in science and English, is much greater than previously.

Pupils thrive on the many opportunities that are available for them to take responsibility. For example, they organise events to raise money in their houses for charity, for example operating a cake fair, bric-a-brac sales and car washing. The highly influential school council provides an opportunity for pupils to inform decisions about school organisation such as the design of the school gazebo, promoting 'walk to school' week and reintroducing hot lunches. Pupils have an excellent understanding of what constitutes a safe and healthy lifestyle and this is reflected in the re-accreditation of Healthy School status. Above all, they have an excellent understanding of what living in a community means and they know and are proud of the rights, respects and responsibility programme which operates across the school and is recognised in the UNICEF award.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

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

How effective is the provision?

Teaching has improved considerably since the previous inspection and staff plan lessons thoroughly. Almost all lessons seen were of good quality with high levels of engagement and enjoyment, paired talk and collaborative group work being a key feature of activities. Teachers question pupils well and frequently develop the pupils' spoken language skills and vocabulary by demanding extended answers that probe pupils' understanding. For example, in an outstanding Year 5 literacy lesson, pupils' understanding of aspects of descriptive language was enhanced very well when studying the witches from Macbeth. The highly lively introduction, in which the teaching assistant became a witch, led to rapid progress as the class teacher raised demanding questions. In consequence the pupils achieved exceptionally well when asked to enrich the statement 'the witches waited'. The teacher skilfully raised aspects of grammar including simile, metaphor, embedded clauses and oxymoron. In a few lessons, the pace of learning dips because teachers talk for too long and keep pupils sitting when they could be starting on what are often exciting and challenging activities. Teachers plan well to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and they make good progress towards their targets due to the support provided by skilled teaching assistants.

The careful curricular planning of a good range of themes and topics ensures that pupils' basic skills are enhanced by meaningful links between subjects. There has been a significant improvement in the curriculum for gifted and talented pupils since the previous

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inspection. Recently, for example, able writers worked in collaboration to produce exceptionally high quality stories which they illustrated by taking a range of photographs of themselves in costume and then applying their well-developed information and communication technology (ICT) skills to publish their books. Additional activities remain strong and the many visits out of school, such as to Reading Museum when studying the Victorians, and also visitors to the school enliven learning.

Outstanding care, guidance and support underpin the pupils' effective personal development. There is particularly strong provision for families whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. Following a good training programme, the school has specialist assistants to support pupils' emotional development and an officer who provides family support. Parents and carers commented on how much they appreciate the good quality breakfast and after-school club. High quality induction procedures for children entering the Reception class and those who join the school at other times enable these children to settle quickly and well. The school draws very well on the expertise of external agencies to devise programmes for those with more complex needs.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher, supported well by the effective senior staff, has worked skilfully to secure improvements. Additional rigour in procedures to track pupils' progress now enables staff to have a clear view of pupils' strengths and what needs to be improved, so that any pupil in danger of slipping behind is highlighted quickly and provided with appropriate support programmes. Thanks to a well-conceived programme of professional development, staff with particular responsibilities play an important role in the school's monitoring and evaluation procedures, particularly in English, mathematics and science. The school has good plans to extend this to other staff. Staff share a clear and decisive vision for the school which is based on a deep commitment to providing equal opportunities for all pupils, whatever their ability or background. Great care, for example, is taken to ensure that pupils in the many mixed-aged classes receive parallel work and attention. Pupils' well-being and health and safety receive close attention. As a result, safeguarding procedures are robust and staff vetting procedures are of good quality.

The school is a harmonious and cohesive community. Pupils are proud of the prominent position that the school plays in the local community. For example, they were animated when talking about the ICT lessons that they lead for the elderly community and also the 'Big Tea' for locals to attend. In addition, pupils have worked with local police in raising awareness about speeding on local access roads. The school systematically celebrates the

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many cultures of the pupils in the school, and has also, for example, called on the local Nepalese community to support the school's martial arts programme. The school has linked with a contrasting school in Coventry, and jointly they are supporting a linked school in Malawi.

Governance is good. The members of the governing body know the school well because their monitoring procedures have been strengthened and there are good links established in many areas of the school. For example, the link governors for the Early Years Foundation Stage and for science regularly visit to observe learning, and they provide high quality reports for other governors. This enables the governing body to challenge the school to further improve, and governors recognise that building on this good practice across the whole curriculum is the next step in their own development.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children are exceptionally well cared for. Parents and carers spoke about their appreciation for the excellent way in which the staff help their children to settle into school quickly and thoroughly enjoy learning. Children's skills and abilities on entry to the Reception classes are in line with those expected for their age, and they make rapid progress in their learning. The children who enter school speaking little English are included exceptionally well and given close support to help them feel secure. All groups of children rapidly develop confidence and independence because of the caring and supportive ethos. Consequently they quickly become engrossed in their play and they persevere exceptionally well in their tasks. The staff are particularly adept at questioning children. This helps them to develop their speaking and listening skills well. An excellent range of carefully chosen themes and topics enlivens children's learning and play, and staff ensure that activities, both indoors and outdoors, interest and engage children. Staff

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provide an excellent balance between activities that the children choose for themselves and those that are led by adults. The staff are particularly skilled in supporting the children's development of sounds and letters and these regular well-organised sessions contribute well to the rapid progress that children make in building their language and literacy skills. Assessment is very regular and thorough and the resulting information is used especially well to plan for the next steps in learning. Leadership and management are excellent. The staff work closely together as a team and the highly effective leader ensures that the children's welfare is given a very high priority.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers are unanimous in saying that their children enjoy school and that overall they are happy with the experiences provided for their children. In addition, both those who completed the questionnaires and the many parents and carers who spoke to inspectors were unanimous in saying that teaching is good and their children make enough progress. A small minority said that they felt that the school does not deal well with incidents of unacceptable behaviour. However, behaviour was consistently good during the inspection and sometimes outstanding, and the school's procedures to support good behaviour were found to be exemplary. Teachers apply the good quality behaviour policy consistently and well. This results in the pupils being clear about the high expectations that all the adults have regarding their behaviour, and also the consequences of the rare incidents of poor behaviour.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

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

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 108 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 322 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	82	76	26	24	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	82	76	25	23	1	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	53	49	52	48	3	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	68	63	38	35	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	73	68	35	32	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	57	53	45	42	2	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	71	66	33	31	0	0	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)	68	63	34	31	2	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	63	58	42	39	1	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	61	56	39	36	8	7	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	58	54	43	40	3	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	78	72	27	25	0	0	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	84	78	24	22	0	0	0	0

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 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	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 December 2010 and 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.

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

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 pupils' 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.



13 July 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School, Farnborough GU14 8LS

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. We really enjoyed seeing you working hard in lessons and getting on so well together. My colleague and I thoroughly enjoyed watching your rehearsal of *The Tempest*. We thought you were all excellent and your singing was beautiful. I particularly enjoyed 'I'm a Miserable Monster' and I thought that the singing, both by the choir and Caliban, was brilliant! I am sure that your parents and carers will have thoroughly enjoyed your singing and acting when they got to see it. The many of you who were kind enough to speak to us showed how proud you are of your school. You are right to be, because yours is a good school.

We found that you really enjoy school, behave well, attain above average standards and make good progress in your personal development. You know all about how to stay safe and to live healthy lives. Your headteacher runs your school well and she has good support from all the other staff and the governing body. They understand how they could make it even better. Your teachers do a good job too. They teach you well and make sure that your topics are exciting and interesting. Everyone makes sure that you feel really safe in school.

Even in a good school such as yours, there are always some things to do to make it better. We have asked your headteacher to make sure all your lessons are as good as the best. To do this, we have asked teachers to do three things. First, to make sure that your learning is brisk by not spending too long introducing lessons; second, to give you more chances to practise your mathematics skills in practical and investigational mathematics; and finally, to make sure that all your teachers assess your learning equally well. You can help by always trying to do your best.

We hope that you continue to enjoy your education as much as you do now.

Yours sincerely

Keith Sadler

Lead inspector

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