

St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119691
Local authority	Blackpool
Inspection number	379872
Inspection dates	17–18 October 2011
Reporting inspector	Geoffrey Yates

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	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	207
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Stephen Pearson
Headteacher	Sean O'Hare
Date of previous school inspection	20 June 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Fourteen lessons were observed, taught by eight members of staff. The inspectors held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at the tracking of pupils' progress and the school's monitoring, self-evaluation and planning for improvement. The inspectors analysed 136 questionnaires returned by parents and carers. Discussions were also held with parents and carers.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work looking in detail at a number of key areas.

- How well pupils achieve, especially the higher-attaining pupils in developing their writing skills.
- How well the Early Years Foundation Stage meets children's needs.
- How successful the school has been in ensuring teachers use assessment information well.
- How well the school provides for pupils' personal development.

Information about the school

This is an average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average, as is the proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is also below average. The school has gained many awards, including Healthy School status. Since the last inspection, the school building has been extended and the school grounds developed further. There is privately managed on-site provision for pupils before and after school and also a privately run nursery. These provisions will be the subject of a separate inspection by Ofsted.

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

This is a good school. Pupils achieve well and develop into confident youngsters who articulate clearly their appreciation of what the school does for them. While leadership and management is good overall, the highly-skilled outstanding leadership of the headteacher is the cornerstone of the school's success. He has fostered excellent commitment and teamwork amongst the staff and the governing body. The quality of care provided for all pupils, particularly for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, is outstanding as are the links made with parents and carers. Parents and carers who returned the questionnaires and those spoken to during the inspection are highly supportive of all the school does. While pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall, the school rightly recognises that not enough is done to promote pupils' wider understanding of cultures different from their own.

Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and make good progress in their learning. Pupils from Years 1 to 6 continue to make good progress, and this reflects the consistently good teaching. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment is above average and has been so for many years. However, although the proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels in mathematics and reading is above average, this is not the case in writing. The school is taking steps to address this, but the full impact of this work has yet to be seen. Pupils' achievements in other areas are major strengths. For example, pupils' show an excellent knowledge and understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle and of the importance of knowing how to be safe.

Teachers and support staff use assessment effectively to provide work that is well matched to pupils' needs. Lessons mostly move at a fast pace. The curriculum is of a good quality with some aspects outstanding. For example, activities such as 'Bikability' and a wide range of sporting activities are much enjoyed and valued by the pupils. Teachers' focus on basic skills is effective and an abundance of opportunities are provided for pupils to use their information and communication technology (ICT) skills well. However, opportunities are sometimes missed for higher-attaining pupils to be challenged effectively to use their writing skills well in English lessons and in other subjects. There are good assessment systems in place to track pupils' progress and these are increasingly being refined.

The headteacher and the staff team are ambitious for the school and continually seek ways to improve. Improvements made since the previous inspection, not only in the breadth of the curriculum, but also to the building and grounds have enhanced overall provision. Leaders and managers have an accurate understanding of their school and their planning for the future is good. These factors indicate that the school has a good capacity to continue to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate pupils' progress in writing, especially that of the higher-attainers by;
 - ensuring that teachers challenge pupils fully in English lessons to write at length
 - providing more opportunities for them to use their writing skills well in other subjects.
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to improve their understanding of different cultures in the United Kingdom and beyond.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils enjoy their learning. Their attendance is above average and pupils are very keen to succeed. Two strong features of learning across the school are the way in which pupils talk confidently about the work they undertake, and the way they are involved in assessing their own learning. Older pupils in one lesson were bursting with enthusiasm to come up with descriptive vocabulary as a response to a video clip of a fairground ride. One pupil wrote on his whiteboard the words, 'exhilarating' and 'terrifying'. A whole class showed obvious enjoyment in taking part in a lesson in learning to play the violin. Learning was great fun for the 30 pupils equipped with safety helmets developing their cycling skills in the school grounds. All age groups demonstrate good concentration in lessons because the work set is interesting and pupils know teachers value their contributions.

Overall, when children enter the school their development is within the expected range for the age group. Pupils progress well, and as a result their attainment by the end of Year 6 is above average and has been so over the last few years. Inspection evidence shows that currently there is an above-average proportion of pupils working at the expected levels in mathematics and English. Achievement for boys and girls is good, including for those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. However, at the higher level pupils do less well in writing than in mathematics and reading. Pupils do not consistently explore ways of extending their own ideas through writing and so sometimes written pieces are too brief.

By Year 6, pupils display mature, responsible attitudes. They are very aware of the need to think of others less fortunate than themselves and raise money for charities. They are eager to take on responsibilities seriously and carry out their roles very well, for example, as school council members. Pupils of all ages are adamant that

bullying is not tolerated. With good academic standards and good habits of attendance and punctuality, pupils are well prepared for their future education.

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	2
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	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is good throughout the school with some lessons outstanding. Staff are committed and enthusiastic and teaching assistants provide good support. In the more effective lessons, pupils are encouraged to reason and explain in depth their ideas or solutions to problems. For example, older pupils respond well to the challenge of providing appropriate words to create suspense in writing. Written feedback in pupils' books is effective, with marking informing pupils of the next steps they need to take to improve their work.

The curriculum promotes pupils' enjoyment and achievement well. There are plenty of opportunities for pupils to go on visits to places of interest and to work with visiting staff. For example, a whole year group are learning to play the violin with tuition provided by a visiting specialist teacher. The range of extra-curricular activities is outstanding, with a high take up by pupils and this ensures that pupils continue active learning outside lessons. Sporting activities are very high on the agenda with, for example, over 50 pupils taking part in the running club. The school has developed a creative curriculum in which subjects are linked in new and interesting ways. A major strength in the curriculum is the emphasis given to ICT and the excellent attention given to health related issues within the curriculum.

The outstanding quality of care, guidance and support, based firmly on the school's strong Christian foundation, ensures the atmosphere in which good learning can be fostered. Parents and carers agree overwhelmingly that their children are well cared for in school. Very well targeted support helps all pupils to make the best of their opportunities. There is excellent provision for all aspects of pastoral care and pupils, parents and carers find a welcoming environment in the school. The weekly coffee morning for parents and carers is much appreciated by all who attend. Pupils feel

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

entirely safe in school and are clearly very happy. Arrangements to ease pupils' progress and transition through the school and on to secondary education are good.

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?

A culture of self-improvement has been carefully nurtured by the highly experienced headteacher. Senior leaders and managers carry out their duties well. The attention given to providing a very broad range of learning experiences has been a key factor in the school's success. A wide range of activities, including regular consultation with pupils and their families, feeds effectively into self-evaluation procedures. The school has a highly positive relationship with parents and carers, keeping them well informed about their children's development and encouraging them to support their children's learning in different ways. The work done in this aspect by the school's family support worker is outstanding.

The governing body fulfils its duties well, holding the school to account on important decisions and playing an effective strategic role. Safeguarding policies and procedures are rigorously applied, with required training for this aspect fully up to date. Pupils and their parents and carers are fully confident that they, the children, are safe and free from harm. The school's rigorous procedures ensure relationships throughout the whole-school community are harmonious and that pupils' equality of opportunity is good. Every opportunity is taken to enhance pupils' education and welfare, leading to the school forging good relationships with local schools to enrich learning. Good promotion of community cohesion at the local level is being extended by plans to increase national and global links, in order to develop these dimensions more effectively.

These are the grades for the 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	1
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
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Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make good progress from their starting points. Good quality care and very good relationships ensure that children make a happy start in school. They settle quickly and are eager to investigate the range of activities on offer. They behave well, sharing equipment and taking turns. Children select activities and materials independently and concentrate well on their tasks. Good teaching provides a well balanced range of activities in the classroom. Developing children’s early reading, writing and numeracy skills has a high priority and children make good progress in these areas. There is a large outdoor area, which is effectively used and enjoyed by children. For example, the children’s own cardboard box house constructions were taken outside and used by them as an integral part of a role play activity, with the good quality of the construction ensuring that the adverse weather conditions did not tear them apart. At times, the outside area is not fully incorporated into children’s learning but this issue is being addressed. Good leadership ensures all welfare and Early Years Foundation Stage safety requirements are fully implemented. Progress is carefully monitored to plan the next steps in learning, and to ensure the needs of every child are met.

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 in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

There was an above average percentage of questionnaires returned. Parents and carers hold very positive views of the school. Inspection findings support the positive views expressed. All parents and carers expressed satisfaction with many aspects of the school's work, including the way in which it ensures that pupils are happy and safe and that it fully meets their needs.

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 136 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 207 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	104	76	30	22	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	112	82	22	16	0	0	2	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	86	63	49	36	1	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	83	61	48	35	1	1	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	91	67	45	33	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	88	65	48	35	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	97	71	37	27	1	1	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)	87	64	44	32	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	91	67	44	32	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	78	57	51	38	4	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	79	58	48	35	4	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	111	82	22	16	1	1	2	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	105	77	31	23	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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 2010 to 08 April 2011 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.



19 October 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School, Blackpool, FY2 0AJ

Thank you for the very warm welcome when we inspected your school. We thoroughly enjoyed our time with you and appreciated all the help you gave us. It was wonderful to see you taking part in cycling activities in the school grounds and seeing how well you respond to learning challenges. The school newsletter reporters, who interviewed me about the work I do, have the potential to finish up working as reporters on a national newspaper, their questioning skills are excellent.

St Bernadette's is a good school but some aspects are better than that, for example, the work done to make sure you understand what staying healthy means and the high level of care the school provides for you. You get on extremely well together and behave well. I think the members of the school council, and those with other responsibilities, do a wonderful job in helping to run the school. You are keen to learn, work very hard and are making good progress. You can play your part in by keeping your good attendance record and keeping up the hard work.

We have asked the staff to make sure that you are given plenty of challenging opportunities to use your skills well in English lessons and also in other subjects. Also we would like you to have more opportunities to learn about cultures different from your own in the rest of the country and beyond.

Please accept my best wishes for the future. I hope you continue to enjoy school life.

Yours sincerely,

Geoff Yates
Lead Inspector

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