

St Bridget's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111377
Local authority	Warrington
Inspection number	378291
Inspection dates	3–4 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Barbara Flitcroft

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	202
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Gloria Pendergast
Headteacher	Ceri Dobson
Date of previous school inspection	23 April 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed six teachers in 13 lessons and had meetings with parents, groups of pupils, governors and staff. They observed the school's work, and looked at the school's policies, pupil progress data, teachers' plans, reports from the School Improvement Partner and examples of pupils' work. They looked at 33 completed questionnaires returned by parents and carers.

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

- How well pupils have maintained achievement during a period of changes at headteacher level.
- The impact on pupils' progress made by the quality of teaching and assessment.
- How rigorously leaders and managers have led improvement since the last inspection.

Information about the school

St Bridget's is slightly smaller than the average primary school. The proportion of boys in the school is higher than that of girls. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above average. A very large majority of pupils are of White British heritage. There is a small minority who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. More pupils than is usually the case join partway through their primary education or leave the school before the end of Year 6. At the previous inspection in April 2009 the school was judged to be good with some outstanding features. An associate headteacher led the school from September 2009 for one term. The assistant headteacher led the school from January 2010 until she was appointed as headteacher in September 2010. She resumed her duties after leave of absence in June 2011. The assistant headteacher led the school during this time. The school has received numerous awards for its work, including National Healthy School status, the International Schools Award and Every Child Counts School 2012.

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 and improving school. The school has been led by four headteachers since its previous inspection yet its strengths have continued to develop, due to the securely embedded ethos of strong teamwork created by hardworking and committed staff at all levels and by strong governance. Parents and carers pay extensive tribute to the work of the school through comments such as, 'St Bridget's is an excellent environment in which to work and learn; every child really does matter.' In addition, partnerships with schools in the local cluster, Northern Ireland and South Africa complement pupils' learning very well. They effectively extend pupils' understanding of parts of the world beyond their immediate environment.

Children enter the Reception Year with skills which are well below expectations for their age overall. As a result of good progress most attain the early learning goals by the time they enter Year 1. Pupils' good progress continues through Key Stages 1 and 2 and so attainment by the end of Year 6 is broadly in line with national averages. There are differences year-on-year in the proportion of pupils who reach average levels and higher levels at the end of Year 6. These results are greatly affected by the high numbers of pupils who leave and join the school part way through their primary education and differences in the particular learning needs of individual cohorts. The creative curriculum has yet to provide the fullest opportunities for pupils to develop their writing and mathematics skills. However there are evident strengths in the pupils' work in information and communication technology.

Pupils are very proud of their school. Older pupils enjoy being lunchtime buddies to the youngest pupils. Members of the school council are ever-willing to voice their views on school improvement. 'Eco Warriors' and other pupils are proactive in their actions to protect the environment and develop school grounds and the local park. Teaching is good overall. The use of assessment has improved since the previous inspection and rapidly identifies pupils who need further support and ensures effective action to put them back on track. However, teachers' marking does not consistently provide clear feedback to the pupils about what they have done well and about how to improve.

Staff and members of the governing body have an accurate awareness of all aspects of school performance through accurate self-evaluation. Strong commitment to improvement by staff at all levels, an effective ethos for learning and strong governance have enabled the school to sustain improvement since the previous

inspection despite changes of headteachers, demonstrating its good capacity for further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and accelerate progress in English and mathematics by:
 - ensuring marking consistently and accurately comments on what pupils have done well and informs them how to improve their work
 - providing further opportunities, especially through the creative curriculum, for pupils to use, apply and develop their writing and numeracy skills.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils enter the school's welcoming environment joyfully and enjoy the many opportunities they have to share ideas and, as the school motto promotes, share their faith. They are delighted when their classmates experience success in their learning and there is an industrious atmosphere in their classrooms. All groups of pupils, including those learning English as an additional language and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress and achieve well overall. As a result of high-quality support from teaching assistants, a significant number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress in their personal development. Pupils attain broadly average standards in English and mathematics by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 having made good progress from their starting points.

Pupils have the utmost confidence in their teachers and teaching assistants and say, 'We can go to them if we have a worry and they will help us.' As a result pupils feel secure in school and also have a good awareness of how to keep themselves and others safe. They talk confidently and accurately about the importance of eating healthily and take part in a variety of physical activities to keep fit. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good: pupils demonstrate an admirable social conscience and their involvement in a variety of charity appeals reflects an impressive generosity of spirit. Pupils' secure basic skills in English, mathematics and information and communication technology, their good behaviour and satisfactory attendance help to prepare them adequately for the next stage in their education and beyond.

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	3
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	2

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

Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is good overall. Teachers manage potentially challenging behaviour well through applying the school's golden rules consistently. The better lessons move at a fast pace and pupils are engaged fully in their learning. This was seen in a Year 4 poetry lesson when pupils listened to the sounds of bonfire night to stimulate high-quality descriptive phrases. All the different groups of pupils were aware of the teacher's expected outcomes for them and rose proudly to the high level of challenge. Only occasionally was teaching less effective because work set was not matched so accurately to pupils' level of ability. Teachers make good use of practical resources and technology to help pupils to understand, and the skills of the teaching assistants are used well to support pupils' learning. Teachers mark pupils' books regularly, but the quality of advice to pupils on how well they have achieved or how they can improve is inconsistent between classes.

The curriculum is suitably broad and balanced. The school has made a good start on developing a more creative curriculum and the pupils are motivated by this approach. However, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to apply their English and mathematics skills in different curriculum areas. The school uses a wide range of additional strategies to provide for pupils at risk of falling behind. The Every Child a Counter scheme has had a positive impact in Year 2 and attainment has improved. There is a good range of visitors, including specialists in music and physical education and visits, such as to the Manchester Museum of Science and Industry and residential trips. These enhance the curriculum and pupils enjoy the many additional activities available after school.

The care, guidance and support for pupils and their families are at the heart of the school's work. One parent took the trouble to seek out an inspector to say that the teachers and teaching assistants give so much for the sake of the pupils. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are identified at a very early stage. They receive good support in school and from a wide range of other professionals where needed, so they make good progress. There are many examples of the school providing for the needs of the pupils who are potentially most vulnerable, so that they can be fully included. Staff have reached out to families to provide a valuable link with school and this has helped to reduce the number of persistent absentees.

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	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The perceptive headteacher and the able and committed senior leadership team lead by example and engender good levels of teamwork across the school. As a result all staff are active in evaluating school performance and in a shared vision for development. As they say, 'Our opinions are valued and the coordination teams in which we work enable us to advise and support each other.' The governing body provides good support and is well aware of the school's strengths and areas for development. It holds leaders and managers to account for the school's achievements with rigour and is ambitious for the school.

The school has forged very effective partnerships. Discrimination in any form is not tolerated; the school quite rightly prides itself on its inclusive approach and promotes equality of opportunity well. Safeguarding and child protection procedures in particular are good and fully meet current requirements. Training is up to date and relevant policies and practice regularly reviewed. The school promotes community cohesion well. The school community benefits from the wildlife garden, there are good relations with a variety of schools within the local cluster and through the curriculum pupils learn about religions and cultures which are different to their own, for example, through links with schools in South Africa and Northern Ireland.

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	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 enter the Reception class from a variety of settings. As a result of good teaching and very well focused support for those experiencing difficulty, children make good progress throughout the year in all areas of learning. Children are happy,

secure and settled with good relationships and good behaviour. A well-resourced outdoor area, which demands careful supervision because of its complex shape, offers a safe, attractive and exciting learning environment which complements the indoor environment in providing support for all the areas of learning. The outdoor environment is benefitting from recent developments to enhance the learning. Adults contribute strongly to most children making good progress towards the early learning goals. Nonetheless, staff promote the welfare of each individual, and the safeguarding policy and its practice are strengths. The school, rightly, places a great emphasis on children's speaking and listening skills and their personal development, and so they make good progress in these aspects. Continuous monitoring of children's progress leads to an accurate evaluation of their performance and to flexible curricular planning to meet individual needs. Very good partnerships exist between the school and parents as well as other supporting agencies, including nurseries. During the inspection the Early Years leader was absent but discussed her role and the setting during a telephone discussion with inspectors. The class routines ran smoothly in her absence, which confirms the effectiveness of her leadership and the commitment of the staff.

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

All parents and carers who returned a questionnaire expressed positive views about most of the aspects of the school's work. As parents and carers comment, 'Staff and teachers are amazing and helpful.' A very small minority is of the opinion that the school does not deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour and did not meet their child's needs. Inspectors judged pupils' conduct in lessons and around school to be good and found that the needs of pupils were rapidly identified and appropriate support put in place.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Bridget'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 33 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 202 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	24	73	9	27	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	24	73	8	24	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	17	52	15	45	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	19	58	12	36	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	21	64	12	36	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	20	61	12	36	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	20	61	13	39	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)	18	55	12	36	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	18	55	13	39	1	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	15	45	16	48	1	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	17	52	14	42	1	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	18	55	15	45	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	23	70	10	30	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.



7 November 2011

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of St Bridget's Catholic Primary School, Warrington, WA2 0ER

Thank you for making my inspection team so welcome when we visited your school. We think that your school is good, which means that there are many things that the school does well and some which could be improved. We agree with you and your parents and carers that the school takes good care of you all and there is always an adult at hand to give you extra help when you need it. Most of you work hard in school and behave well. We enjoyed talking to you and joining you in lessons. You told us you enjoy school and the creative curriculum seems very popular. I was very impressed when the Victorian teacher took a lesson with Year 5. You were able to tell her lots of facts about Victorian apprentices and the mills where they worked.

The main thing your school needs to do to now is to help you to make even more progress. We have suggested two ways in which staff can help you to do this.

- Make the quality of marking better so that you all know what you have done well and how to improve your work.
- Make more opportunities for you to use your numeracy and writing skills in other subjects.

You can play your part by making sure that you come to school on time every day and by trying your best in all lessons and activities.

We hope you continue to enjoy school.

Yours sincerely

Barbara Flitcroft
Lead inspector

