

St Bernard's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	103462
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	376910
Inspection dates	24–25 May 2012
Lead inspector	Michael Farrell

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	391
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Marie Felli
Headteacher	Patrick O'Leary
Date of previous school inspection	10 February 2009
School address	Wake Green Road Birmingham B13 9QE
Telephone number	0121 4643795
Fax number	0121 4646895
Email address	enquiry@st-bernards.bham.sch.uk

Age group	4–11
Inspection date(s)	24–25 May 2012
Inspection number	376910



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 educational 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 St
Manchester
M1 2WD

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

© Crown copyright 2012



Introduction

Inspection team

Michael Farrell Additional Inspector

Geoff Cresswell Additional Inspector

Linda Rowley Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 15 lessons comprising seven and a half hours teaching; all 14 teachers were seen; meetings were held with groups of pupils, parents and carers, staff, school partners, and governors. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documents including school improvement plans, data on pupils' progress, policies for safeguarding, and scrutinised responses to the inspection questionnaire from 143 parents and carers.

Information about the school

The school is situated south of Birmingham city centre, its pupils coming from a socially diverse area. It is larger than the average-sized primary school. The percentage of children known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average. More than the national percentages are supported by school action of which most are considered to have moderate learning difficulties but fewer than nationally have a statement of special educational needs. The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic groups is higher than nationally and the proportion decreases in older year groups. White British pupils form the highest percentages and the next highest is Pakistani. The percentage of pupils whose home language is not English is higher than nationally. A breakfast club is run by the governing body. The school exceeds the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

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. The welcoming ethos and the deeply rooted sense of valuing different cultures, beliefs and backgrounds is a strength. Pupils achieve well and the school is well led and managed. It is not yet outstanding because not enough of the teaching is outstanding and pupils do not always apply their mathematical skills in other subjects.
- Children join the Reception year at below expected levels and make good progress throughout the school so that they achieve well by the end of Year 6. Different groups including those whose home language is not English, and disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, make good progress and achieve well.
- Teaching is very predominantly good. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge, and effectively deployed teaching assistants contribute strongly to pupils' learning. Lesson pace is well judged and the level of pupils' work pitched accurately. Occasionally, teachers' explanations at the beginning of lessons are too long, and pupils lack opportunities to choose how they present work.
- Behaviour in lessons and around school is good and sometimes outstanding. Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to their learning. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural skills and understanding are developed well. Pupils are safe and both parents and carers and pupils are fully confident about this. Behaviour is good in the breakfast club where pupils socialise well.
- The governing body challenges and supports the school strongly. Governors work very closely with the headteacher, who offers effective leadership and management, fully supported by the cohesive team of senior and middle managers. Staff performance is well managed and teaching strongly led so improvements are secured. The curriculum provides varied and stimulating activities, effectively contributing to pupils' good achievement, but there are not enough opportunities to use mathematical skills and knowledge in all subjects.

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

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that by July 2013, more teaching is outstanding by:
 - shortening whole class teacher explanations at the beginning of lessons
 - providing opportunities for pupils to decide ways of appropriately presenting their work and research.
- Give pupils more opportunities to practise their mathematical skills in all curriculum subjects.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Children enter Reception below expectations especially in communication, language, literacy and calculation. They make good progress and enter Year 1 at age-related levels except in communication, language, literacy and calculation where some children are still a little behind. Pupils continue good progress in Key Stage 1 and at the end of Year 2 attain average levels in reading and mathematics and above-average in writing because it is strongly emphasised. By the end of Year 6, having made good progress in Key Stage 2, pupils are above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Reading progress is strong in Key Stage 2 because pupils are given confidence and enjoy reading and there are particularly well-focused opportunities for them to read in different subjects of the curriculum. Different groups, including pupils speaking English as an additional language, make good progress. Pakistani pupils achieve better than this group nationally. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs achieve well in communication, literacy and numeracy from different starting points because their learning needs are met by individual and small-group work and intensive, structured approaches. They are accurately identified using locally agreed guidance. Pupils whose circumstances make them and their families vulnerable progress well because of strong support systems and the use of sharply focused interventions from external agencies. Pupils confidently use their knowledge of the sounds letters make (phonics) and contextual cues to tackle unfamiliar words and benefit from effective guided reading and skilled phonics teaching. Pupils are well prepared for the next stages of schooling. Parents and carers rightly consider their children are achieving well.

Reception children achieved well in a lesson providing a range of activities such as setting up an 'office', working together harmoniously in shared activities. In a phonics-related activity, children benefited from the teacher's precise explanations. Pupils in a Key Stage 1 lesson on adding and subtracting tens and units, developed

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

mathematical language accurately because the teacher emphasised a variety of terms for subtraction. Other pupils discovered number patterns because of the teacher's skilful steering of the task. In a lesson on identifying features of persuasive writing Key Stage 2 pupils, motivated by group sessions, made good progress in systematically highlighting text, identifying relevant features and sharing thinking. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs achieved well because staff offered timely support while encouraging independence.

Quality of teaching

Teaching observed by inspectors was good in Reception and very predominantly good in other key stages. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are taught well because interventions match their learning needs and progress is carefully monitored to ensure approaches succeed. Strengths of teaching include good pace, challenging work pitched at the right level, and teachers' good subject knowledge. Teaching assistants are effectively deployed, and pupils are deeply involved in their own learning through the use of success criteria and targets which they comprehensively understand. Relationships are deeply caring and behaviour well managed. Conscientious marking consistently encourages pupils and signals how to improve. Well-planned homework effectively supports pupils' progress. Phonics and reading are systematically and enthusiastically taught so pupils are motivated and enjoy literacy. Occasionally lesson openings are too long and pupils are not given opportunities to decide how to present their work.

In a lesson for Reception children, focused teaching enabled the children to progress well in adding numbers to 10. Children using computers developed these skills well because the accurately pitched program motivated them. Key Stage 1 pupils achieved well in a lesson on the structure of non-fiction texts. There were regular opportunities to read aloud and the teaching assistant posed focused questions to help pupils understand structural features. Pupils showed good skills in independent working and in collaboration. In a Key Stage 2 lesson on producing persuasive writing using some Victorian words, pupils were captivated by a video clip of 'Oliver Twist' and embraced the writing task because they enjoyed the Victorian slang. The pace of the lesson was brisk and activities accurately matched pupils' interests and abilities.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils enjoy their school. A Year 6 pupil wrote a letter to inspectors reflecting on the years in school, and ending, 'So that has been my time in primary school and I couldn't have chosen a better one in the world'. Pupils behave well in lessons and elsewhere. Sometimes conduct is excellent. This is because behaviour is well managed and the school ethos nurtures high levels of spiritual and moral development. Pupils encourage the good behaviour of their peers. There have been no exclusions in the current academic year and only two incidents leading to short

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

exclusions in the previous year. Attendance has improved rapidly from below average to above average in the past two years. Insightful monitoring of attendance trends identified lower attendance for some girls and tackling this supported the strong improvement. Pupils engage fully in paired work because their social skills are well developed and they enjoy it. Just occasionally, at the start of lessons, attention may stray if the teacher is speaking for too long.

Pupils like and understand the school's reward systems. They are polite, thoughtful and supportive of each other. Bullying is rare and pupils of different cultures and backgrounds learn and play together harmoniously. A very small number of parents and carers say there is bullying but overall views are very positive indeed. A parent spoke for many saying of the school 'It is a happy place'. Pupils know about different types of bullying, for example towards someone who is from a different background or culture. They know to approach a staff member if any bullying occurs and that they will be listened to and action will be taken. Pupils are sure they are safe and parents and carers are very confident indeed about safety. School behaviour logs indicate little incidence of poor behaviour. Very strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is encouraged by the school's ethos, the curriculum and by the example set by staff, and pupils refer routinely to spiritual aspects of life.

Leadership and management

The school has a clear vision and direction and an embracing ethos in which all pupils are valued as individuals and pupils recognise this. The headteacher provides strong leadership, delegating well so that senior and middle leaders take responsibility for their areas and are fully accountable. Leaders effectively convey high expectations and ambition to staff, who are very proud to work at the school. Good leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage are reflected in detailed tracking records, and strong links with parents and carers and nurseries. The governing body challenges and supports well as evidenced by governors' minutes, inspectors' discussions with governors, and governors' written reports following focused visits to the school. No discrimination is evident and the school promotes the equal valuing of individuals very well. Any pupil or group beginning to slip behind is identified and remedial action taken. Teaching is well led and records of school observations of teaching are thorough, detailed and astute, clearly indicating how to improve. Robust performance management and good professional development are closely matched to the needs of the school and the individual member of staff. Thorough systems of self-evaluation lead to accurate judgements and the local school 'cluster' contributes considerably through joint training and working. Extensive partnerships with others enhance pupils' academic progress and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Safeguarding meets requirements. Absences are followed up tenaciously. Systems for staff vetting and its recording are thorough. The curriculum contributes strongly to pupils' understanding of safety. It is broad, balanced, enriched by an exceptionally wide variety of extra-curricular activities and encourages pupils' motivation and

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

enjoyment. The curriculum promotes spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well because of well-planned contributions from religious education, topics, links with the community and other learning opportunities. At times there are not enough opportunities to apply mathematical skills and knowledge in all subjects. The school ensures pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain and in a global society through the strong emphasis on community.

Parents and carers value the school highly, considering rightly that they are kept well informed about their child's progress. Since its previous inspection the school has improved achievement, teaching (especially in Years 3 and 4) and leadership and management from satisfactory to good and sustained pupils' good behaviour. School self-evaluation is clear, focused, and specific and effective development planning draws on the views of parents, carers and staff and systematic reviews. Priorities are well considered and manageable. The school clearly demonstrates it can improve further.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	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 to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

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

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
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.



28 May 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Bernard's Catholic Primary School, Birmingham, B13 9QE

My colleagues and I really enjoyed meeting you when we inspected your school recently. You were very courteous to us and thank you especially to those of you who read to us or talked about your experiences of school. St. Bernard's is a good school. It is well led and managed. Teaching is good so you make good progress right through the school. You behave very well and told us in your questionnaires and when you met us that you enjoyed school a great deal. I was especially struck by the way you play and work together. You clearly treasure this. There are some things the school could do even better so I have asked staff to:

- make sure teachers' explanations at the beginning of lessons are not too long and you have opportunities to decide the way you present your work and research
- make sure you have more opportunities to use mathematics in different subjects in the curriculum.

How can you help with this? You can think about different ways to show off your work and you can take every opportunity to use your mathematical skills and knowledge in other lessons. I am confident you will do your best to achieve this.

Thank you for being so kind to us. Best wishes for your future.

Yours sincerely

Michael Farrell
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.**