

# St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	106116
<b>Local authority</b>	Stockport
<b>Inspection number</b>	395412
<b>Inspection dates</b>	14–15 June 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Stephen Wall

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	214
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Bernadette Fletcher
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mike O'Brien
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	16 June 2009
<b>School address</b>	Foliage Road Brinnington Stockport SK5 8AR
<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 4304601
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## Introduction

Inspection team

Stephen Wall

Additional Inspector

Kathy Thompson

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed twelve lessons taught by eight teachers. They also observed the teaching of phonics (letters and sounds) and scrutinised a selection of pupils' work books in Key Stages 1 and 2. Inspectors held meetings with staff, pupils and members of the governing body. They looked at a range of documentation including: policies, procedures and records relating to safeguarding, attendance and behaviour; minutes of meetings of the governing body and the school's self-evaluation and development planning. Inspectors also took account of the 99 questionnaires returned by parents and carers as well as those returned by staff and pupils.

## Information about the school

This is an average-sized primary school in which the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. Most pupils are of White British heritage and speak English as their first language. However, an increasing number of pupils who speak little or no English are joining the school from Eastern European countries. The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is in line with the national average. The school meets the current floor standard which are the minimum standards expected by the government. Since the time of the previous inspection there have been a significant number of staffing changes. The school provides and manages before- and after-school care provision for pupils.

**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

<b>Overall Effectiveness</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>1</b>

## Key Findings

- This is an outstanding school. It enjoys exceptional levels of support from parents and carers all of whom would recommend it wholeheartedly to other parents and carers.
- All groups of pupils, including those who are disabled or who have special educational needs, make outstanding progress and achieve exceptionally well. From starting points that are generally well below age-related expectations, attainment is above average by the end of Key Stage 2. A previous gap of lower attainment in English compared to mathematics has been closed because of the strong and effective measures taken by leaders and managers.
- Teaching is outstanding. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge that they use exceptionally well to challenge pupils' thinking, although in a few classes the level of challenge in tasks set is sometimes not very well matched to the abilities of different groups of learners. Teachers use questioning outstandingly well to encourage pupils to articulate and justify their answers and opinions at length. Pupils take exceptional pride in the neat presentation of their written work. Marking is regular and usually of high quality, although occasionally teachers' comments do not make clear what pupils need to do to improve their work.
- Behaviour is excellent both in lessons and around school. Pupils are exceptionally courteous to each other, the adults working with them and to visitors. They say how very safe they feel in school because adults take their personal welfare exceptionally seriously. Attendance is above average.
- Excellent leadership and management, including the contribution of the governing body, ensure that there is a razor-sharp focus on constant improvement. The outstanding curriculum is highly successful in stimulating pupils' interest. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Self-evaluation is accurate and honest. Performance management uses the outcomes astutely to tackle relative weaknesses and to enable leaders to drive forward the quality of teaching and learning.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment even further by:
  - making sure that teaching is consistent in setting tasks that are appropriately challenging to fully meet the needs and abilities of different groups of learners
  - ensuring that all marking is of the same high quality in showing pupils what they need to do to improve their work.

## Main Report

### Achievement of pupils

In lessons pupils are highly enthusiastic learners. They strive to give of their best at all times. Teachers successfully strive to make learning fun and enjoyable. Happy laughter regularly rings out from classrooms. Pupils respond enthusiastically to challenging questions and tackle difficult problems tenaciously. They work exceptionally well in small groups where they contribute their ideas with great gusto and listen respectfully to others' views and opinions. Pupils take great pride in the presentation of their written work.

Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are generally well below age-related expectations, especially in communication and language, and in social skills. They get off to an excellent start in the Early Years Foundation Stage because provision is very astutely led and managed and because of the excellence of the teaching they receive. Key Stages 1 and 2 build expertly on these excellent foundations and ensure that pupils continue to make rapid and sustained progress as they move up through the school. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment is broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. Attainment and progress at the end of Key Stage 2 dipped in 2011 because the cohort was small and contained a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. However, inspection evidence shows that current attainment is securely back on track at above-average levels. A previous gap between attainment in English and mathematics has been closed because the school has sharpened its strategies to improve reading and is providing more structured opportunities for pupils' to develop their extended writing skills. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs also make outstanding progress because of the support they receive from a large team of highly talented and motivated learning support assistants. Pupils who speak English as an additional language also make very rapid and sustained progress because of the excellent support they receive.

The teaching of phonics (letters and sounds) is highly successful in developing pupils' reading skills. Attainment in reading is above average by the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils of all ages say how much they enjoy reading, not just in school, but also in their leisure time. All parents and carers who returned questionnaires are very pleased with the progress their children are making. Inspection evidence fully endorses their views.

### Quality of teaching

'Teachers make learning fun', is a phrase used repeatedly by pupils; a view wholeheartedly confirmed by inspection observations of teaching and learning. In lessons, teachers' excellent planning ensures that pupils are clear about what is expected of them. Highly effective question and answer sessions to check pupils' understanding and readiness routinely precede independent work. Pupils settle to work with great enthusiasm and really

strive to give of their best because they recognise that their teachers go to great lengths to make learning interesting and fun. They love answering the challenging questions that teachers routinely pose. For example, in a Key Stage 2 literacy lesson on *The Wizard of Oz*, the teacher asked why the Wicked Witch of the West has no name. After some deliberation and thought, a group of pupils came up with the exceptionally perceptive response that it was possibly because her role in the play is more important than her character and that giving her a name may have made her a more interesting individual than she actually is! In another lesson on the power of advertising, the class watched, with obvious enjoyment, a video of a very entertaining advertisement for a car. When the teacher asked what the purpose of the video was, the response came that it was trying to, 'entice people to buy the car by associating it with fun lifestyles and happiness'. Examples such as these show how astute questioning, discussion and reasoned argument are the cornerstones of teaching upon which learning is structured. Consequently, most pupils are unusually articulate for their age with high levels of confidence in expressing themselves. Most teaching sets high levels of challenge. However, occasionally it can be too high for some pupils or, conversely, not quite high enough for others. This acts sometimes as a brake on accelerating progress at an even faster pace. Learning support assistants play a pivotal role in supporting pupils' learning, especially that of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, so that these pupils make rapid and sustained progress as they move up through the school.

Teachers' high expectations are mirrored in the very obvious pride with which pupils present their written work. The quality of their handwriting and the presentation of their work are nearly always exemplary. Marking is regular and usually of very high quality. Occasionally, however, it does not indicate clearly enough what pupils need to do to improve their work or make progress towards their targets.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Pupils say that hardly any lessons are disrupted because of poor behaviour and that teachers are quick to deal effectively with isolated occurrences. School records show very few instances of poor behaviour over time. School records also show outstanding levels of support for pupils whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable and the significant impact it has on improving their attitudes to school, their progress and their attendance. Pupils fully understand the nature of various forms of bullying and say that it hardly ever occurs. Pupils work and play in a warm and cohesive environment where respect and tolerance are to the fore. As a result, their social and moral development is outstanding. Assemblies are used exceptionally well to celebrate success and provide opportunities for deep spiritual reflection in a warm and family-like atmosphere. Pupils who are at an early stage of speaking English as an additional language are fully included and speak confidently within their limits in front of the whole school. Pupils say how very safe they feel in school and how well known they are as individuals. They understand the nature of situations that are potentially unsafe and what to do to avoid them or deal with them. This includes the potential dangers of using information and communication technology (ICT). The school has worked very effectively to improve attendance. As a result, attendance is above average and continuing to improve.

The school's before- and after-school provision is expertly led and managed. Appropriate levels of supervision ensure a welcoming and safe environment and an appropriate range of activities for pupils of all ages.

Parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire are almost unanimous in believing that behaviour and safety give no cause for concern, a view fully endorsed by inspection evidence.

## **Leadership and management**

The headteacher, ably supported by other leaders and managers, including an outstanding governing body, sets a highly positive tone for the school and high expectations for what pupils are expected to achieve. Teamwork in the pursuit of excellence is exceptionally strong. Assessment information is used astutely to set challenging targets and track pupils' progress towards them. Significant staffing changes have been managed very effectively to maintain and further improve the school's record of outstanding achievement since the previous inspection, thus demonstrating the school's excellent capacity to continue its strong upward trend of improvement. Leaders and managers monitor the quality of teaching regularly and rigorously. The outcomes are used effectively to manage performance and improve the quality of teaching. Exceptionally strong links with other schools and higher education providers have been forged. These features, along with suitable professional development, make an outstanding contribution to developing best practice across the school. Leaders and managers promote a challenging and very supportive learning environment in which all pupils are valued equally. As a result, all groups of pupils, including disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and the growing number of pupils who are at the early stages of speaking English as an additional language, make excellent progress. This demonstrates the school's highly effective promotion of equal opportunities for all.

The outstanding curriculum fully meets pupils' needs and provides them with a wealth of memorable experiences. The introduction since the previous inspection of the International Primary Curriculum is much praised by pupils, whose enthusiasm for topic work and features such as 'Wonder Weeks' knows no bounds. The curriculum is highly effective in supporting pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school provides a wide range of enrichment activities much to pupils' appreciation. Pupils speak glowingly about the introduction of cookery lessons in which they use the products grown in the school's impressive gardening areas. Safeguarding procedures fully meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

## 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](http://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.**



18 June 2012

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School, Stockport, SK5 8AR**

Thank you for the warmth of your welcome during the recent inspection of your school. I was very impressed with how proud you are of your school and how very well you behave both in lessons and around the school.

Your school is outstanding. The excellent teaching you receive and the exciting range of things the school provides for you to do enable you to make excellent progress and achieve outstandingly well at all stages as you move up through the school. You told us how much you enjoy learning and that your teachers really strive to make learning interesting and fun. This was obvious in the lessons inspectors observed when we came to watch you at work. It was a real pleasure to see how hard you all work and how you always try your best – well done! Your school values and cherishes each one of you as an individual. Everything it does is aimed at making sure each of you gets off to the very best possible start in life and it succeeds!

To help you make even better progress in your learning we are asking your school to make sure that:

- in every lesson the tasks that you are set are neither too difficult nor too easy but just right for each of you, depending on how easy or difficult you find learning
- when teachers mark your written work they always show you clearly what you need to do to improve.

You have played a very important part in the outstanding success of your school and I am confident that you will continue to work hard to make sure it remains so successful in the coming years.

I wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Wall  
Lead inspector

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