

St. Bernard's Catholic Primary School

Victoria Park Avenue, Lea, Preston, PR2 1RP

Inspection dates 11–12 September, 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils make good progress throughout the school and achieve well in English, mathematics and other subjects by the time they leave school. Since the previous inspection the standard of writing has improved significantly.
- The quality of teaching is now consistently good with examples of outstanding teaching. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and good use of assessment information is made to plan work which meets the needs of individual pupils. Lessons capture the imaginations of pupils and this helps them to learn productively.
- Pupils enjoy school and they show respect for each other and the adults around them. Their views are valued and they are safe and well looked after. Pupils behaviour is good and their attendance is above average.
- Leadership and management are good. The headteacher is a very effective leader. All the staff and the governing body are totally committed to providing a good and improving education for their pupils while encouraging pupils' development as individuals. Changes to the curriculum and professional development for teachers and teaching assistants have led to improvements in teaching, achievement and behaviour and safety since the previous inspection.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The proportion of pupils making more than expected progress is not yet high enough.
- There are a few lessons when the more able are not consistently challenged in the development of their writing skills.
- Pupils do not consistently check and improve their written work.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed six teachers and visited 12 lessons.
- Discussions were held with school staff, groups of pupils, a representative of the local authority and members of the governing body.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation including safeguarding documents, the school's self-evaluation and development plans, local authority evaluations, records of pupils' attainment and progress, and pupils' work.
- Inspectors talked to parents and took account of the surveys which the school has carried out with parents . There was one response to Parent View.

Inspection team

Naomi Taylor, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

David Law

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Bernard's is a smaller than average primary school, although numbers on roll have increased since the last inspection.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by school action is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for pupil premium is above average.
- There are breakfast clubs, after-school clubs and a Nursery which are not managed by the governing body.
- The school holds Green School, School Lifestyle and Green Partnership Awards.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality of teaching to increase the proportion of outstanding lessons and thus accelerate achievement, particularly in English at the higher levels, by:
 - ensuring that the more-able pupils, particularly in Key Stage 2, are consistently challenged
 - developing pupils' ability to check and improve their work.
- Develop further the opportunities for parents to help their children to improve their skills in both reading and writing.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Children settle extremely well when they join the Reception class as a result of very effective transition arrangements. The children had only experienced one full day at school when this inspection began and already they showed signs of playing and learning well together. They quickly build up an understanding of the 'Green Rules' which develop their sense of understanding right from wrong and expectations of how to conduct themselves.
- Pupils join Reception with skills that are generally below those expected for their age. Since the last inspection, an increase in staffing in Reception has enabled adults to provide a good balance of both adult-led and child-initiated experiences beyond the classroom which the children clearly enjoy. Children in Reception and Key Stage 1 make good progress overall, although writing remains weaker due to their generally low starting point in this area.
- Throughout Key Stage 2 all groups of pupils, including those who are disabled or who have special educational needs and those who are known to be eligible for pupil premium support, make good progress and some better. The gaps between girls and boys attainment in mathematics and writing are closing.
- Attainment at Key Stage 2 is now generally in line with national expectations in English and mathematics. Most pupils make expected progress and the proportion making more than expected progress compares favourably to the national average. Improving writing has been a priority for the school and although levels of attainment are improving, fewer pupils achieve at the higher level in writing than in reading.
- Changes have been made to the teaching of reading skills and this has resulted in improvements in pupils' ability to learn how to link letters with sounds. For example, in Reception, children demonstrated their ability to recognise letters and sounds and the teacher generated real enthusiasm for learning through whole class singing. Attainment in reading by the end of Year 2 is now in line with expectations and this was demonstrated by the pupils who read to inspectors.
- The positive changes to the curriculum, including a skills-based approach to learning and topic work based around the interest of pupils, are improving achievement securely and contributing to good learning and performance overall in lessons.
- Parents told inspectors that they are extremely pleased with the progress that their children are making and this is reflected in the school's own parent surveys.

The quality of teaching

is good

- As a result of the headteacher prioritising improvements in teaching and learning since the last inspection, teaching is now consistently good throughout the school. This has led to improvements in the engagement and enjoyment of pupils in their learning resulting in improvements in achievement for all groups of pupils.
- In the best lessons, where achievement is outstanding, the teachers and teaching assistants plan lessons really well to ensure that all pupils make excellent progress. An example of this was seen in a Year 1 lesson when pupils were learning about sequences through a pirate theme. They were totally captivated by the experience and, as a result, their progress was exceptional because their reading and writing skills were developed through a range of extremely enjoyable activities.
- In Key Stage 2, pupils learn about the power of language to provoke feelings and emotions. In a Year 4/5 lesson, for example, pupils demonstrated their fascination of the impact of the use of words in poems with pupils imaginatively using onomatopoeia, similes and metaphors to express their thoughts. They independently check their spellings and understanding of words using dictionaries.
- Teachers and teaching assistants now use their accurate assessment of pupils' progress to plan

their lessons well to meet the needs of all pupils. The pupil premium is primarily used to provide bespoke intervention for individuals and/or groups of pupils within the classroom or beyond and also for support in the 'Sunshine Room' which is accessible to the wider family. This has led to the closing of gaps in progress for the potentially vulnerable pupils.

- Occasionally, pupils do not always develop their skills to enable them to check and improve their written work, particularly the higher ability group.
- Teachers' marking is thorough and helps pupils to recognise their good work and areas for improvement. There are, however, too few opportunities for pupils to check and improve their own written work.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are given well targeted support both in class and through precise intervention work by staff and/or external agencies which ensures they make equally good progress in relation to other pupils.

The behaviour and safety of pupils is good

- Pupils behave very well together and towards staff and visitors to the school. With an atmosphere of mutual respect and compassion towards one another, the school is, as one parent put it, 'a lovely family'.
- Pupils say they feel very safe in school and this is reflected in responses from parents too who told inspectors that good behaviour is now a key feature of this school. They are taught how to measure risks and why and how to choose good behaviour. One parent told an inspector how their child had developed an understanding of how to choose appropriate behaviour.
- Pupils are adamant that bullying just does not happen but they would be able to talk to any adult if they thought that this was happening to them or someone else. Incident logs demonstrate that there are very few behavioural incidents.
- The code of conduct, devised with the pupils, is understood by all members of the school community and good behaviour is celebrated and rewarded. Groups of pupils in Key Stage 2 enjoy the responsibility of supporting the younger children. Pupils come together for collective worship where they clearly demonstrate their ability to organise themselves in an orderly manner. The effective behaviour policy has ensured that pupils are securely aware of boundaries and consequences.
- Pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable and their families are exceptionally well cared for. Pupils really enjoy being a part of their school and this is reflected in above average attendance for all groups of pupils. One member of staff commented that St Bernard's is 'a place where each and every child and adult are valued and given every opportunity to shine' which reflects the school motto of 'You are precious in our eyes'.

The leadership and management is good

- The headteacher, together with the senior leadership team, has led a number of positive changes since the previous inspection and has rightly prioritised teaching and learning. Through performance management, senior leaders have been pro-active in providing professional development for staff and sought specialist support from the local authority. This has led to improvement in the quality of teaching and learning and the achievement of pupils.
- Changes to the planned curriculum, including an emphasis on developing basic skills, has already had an impact on the engagement of pupils. They have a vast array of opportunities beyond lessons which include sporting, music and many other activities.
- Pupils are able to play an important role in the life of their local community, engaging with the elderly and proactively raising money for local, national and international charities. Their breadth of opportunities both in the classroom and beyond ensures good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. An effective focus on equality and tackling discrimination is seen through disabled pupils and those with special educational needs achieving as well as, and sometimes better than, their peers.

- Whilst some parents and carers are engaged with their child's learning, the school needs to further develop the opportunities for parents and carers to develop ways with which to support learning at home.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements.
- The governance of the school:
 - Governors are ambitious for St Bernard's School. They are extremely supportive of the headteacher and the new strategies she has introduced. They question and challenge senior and middle leaders regularly.
 - Governors meet pupil councillors and canvass the opinion of parents through the distribution of questionnaires to ensure that they are aware of the views of all those involved with the school.

What inspection judgements mean

School

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	119449
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	401843

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	173
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev Jim Slater
Headteacher	Mrs Mia Barlow
Date of previous school inspection	10 December 2009
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