

St Bernadettes Roman Catholic Primary School Aided

Rising Sun Cottages, Wallsend, Tyne and Wear, NE28 9JW

Inspection dates 10–11 July 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Pupils throughout the school make good and sometimes outstanding progress, from a range of different starting points. By the end of Year 6, standards are above average in English and mathematics. Reading and mathematics are strengths.
- Pupils eligible for pupil premium funding make outstanding progress. Their attainment is in line with other pupils in their year group.
- Teaching is good with some that is outstanding. Lessons are prepared well and pupils enjoy learning as they work hard.
- Excellent provision in the specialist additional resource unit ensures that pupils make their best progress because excellent support to improve behaviour means they are well placed to learn.
- This is an extremely caring school where everyone matters. Excellent provision to learn about other people means that pupils value differences in lifestyles. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding.
- Behaviour and safety are outstanding. Pupils are happy and enjoy school. They work and play together showing care and consideration as they look after each other.
- Leaders and managers, including governors are committed to developing children who are well prepared for life. This together with outstanding team work between leaders and managers at all levels continues to enable the school to act quickly to address variations in teaching performance and pupil attainment.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough teaching is outstanding. For some pupils work is not challenging enough and they are not given enough creative activities to practise their newly-acquired skills independently.
- Pupils' achievement in writing is less consistent than in reading or mathematics because there are too few opportunities to practise skills across other subjects at their individual level.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in all classes and saw 17 lessons, of which three were joint observations with senior leaders. In addition, the inspection team made a number of other short visits to lessons and listened to reading.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, pupils, members of the governing body, staff and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of 121 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and two letters received from parents.
- There were insufficient responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) to allow results to be shown. However, inspectors took account of the results of the school's own questionnaire to parents, as well as a letter from a parent, a telephone call from a parent and discussions with parents at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors took account of 27 staff questionnaires.
- They observed the school's work and took into account the work in pupil's books, the school's own data on pupils' current progress, planning and monitoring documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance and information relating to safeguarding.
- Inspectors observed pupils during morning playtime and lunchtime.

Inspection team

Kate Pringle, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Tim Nelson	Additional Inspector
Anne Firth	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger-than-average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those children in local authority care or for service families, is below average.
- The large majority of pupils are of White British background.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is average.
- The proportion supported at schools action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The school provides a specialist additional resource unit for 12 pupils with severe social, emotional and behavioural needs funded by the local authority.
- The school is a lead initial teacher training school.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve achievement in writing to bring it more in line with that in reading, by:
 - ensuring that work is always well matched to individual abilities and focuses upon what pupils need to learn in order progress more quickly
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to write in other subjects and maintaining the same levels of challenge as that expected in literacy lessons.
- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching, by:
 - providing wider opportunities for pupils to practise and understand new skills before they use them independently
 - providing better challenges for pupils to enable them to use their new skills in reading, writing and mathematics to solve problems, be creative and find things out for themselves.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills below those expected for their age, particularly in speaking and listening and their personal and social development. Because staff understand their needs well and encourage parents to be part of their learning, children progress well.
- This good progress generally continues over Key Stages 1 and 2, however, at times since the last inspection, attainment at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 has been variable. For example, attainment in English at the end of Year 6 in 2012 dipped to broadly average.
- Inspection evidence indicates that there has been good improvement to the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Years 2 and 6 in the current year. By the end of Year 6, attainment is significantly above average and the great majority of pupils attain expected levels for their age. Increasing proportions are achieving at higher levels especially in reading.
- Throughout the school however, achievement in writing is below that in reading and mathematics. In writing, the expectation of how much improvement individual pupils should make over time is lower overall than in reading and mathematics. This somewhat limits progress in this subject. Writing opportunities across other subjects are not always frequent enough and do not demand the same expectation in the quality of writing by teachers and where this is the case standards can fall.
- Progress across all groups of pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is good. An effective tracking system is enabling all teachers to recognise more quickly when these pupils are falling behind and provide appropriate support to quicken the pace of their learning. The use of highly-focused interventions provided by well-trained teaching assistants enables pupils to quickly regain lost ground.
- Pupils in the specialist additional resource unit make good progress because staff are relentless in their efforts to help these pupils manage their own behaviour well. Pupils are encouraged to concentrate and engage more readily with their friends and staff in learning activities.
- The teaching of reading is a strength because of the successful focus on the teaching of letters and sounds (phonics). There is increasing improvement in the skills of younger pupils who now achieve in line with other Year 1 pupils nationally. Similarly, older pupils make good use of their phonic skills to decode new words and, together with a wide range of reading opportunities, this helps to improve their fluency and understanding.
- Responses to the parental questionnaire and discussions with pupils indicate that children are happy and make good progress. Pupils feel they are part of the learning process and find comments from teachers on how to improve their work helpful.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Pupils enjoy every aspect of their school life. They have very high regard for their teachers and seek approval by working hard even when they find tasks difficult.
- The quality of teaching over time is good with some that is outstanding. Teachers know what they want pupils to learn about and plan carefully. They expect pupils to work hard and achieve well. In the best lessons teachers use their knowledge of what pupils know and what they need to learn providing a range of teaching methods to make sure pupils progress well. Occasionally, some work set for pupils is too easy and this means that they achieve less than they could.
- Teachers generally use a good range of strategies to help pupils to learn. At times pupils have insufficient time to practise their learning in one aspect, for example letter writing, before they move onto something different. In such cases, this means that pupils do not have time to use and apply their new skills in different ways before they move on to new learning.
- When pupils learn best they are encouraged to be independent and find out answers for themselves through tasks well matched to their abilities. They use their developing skills in

reading writing and mathematics in work which challenges their understanding. They solve problems, are creative and respond positively to challenges which reflect real life situations.

- Where teaching is less successful, work does not encourage independence and is too directed by teachers. There can be too much reliance on worksheets for pupils to complete.
- Within the specialist additional resource unit, pupils' behaviour can impact heavily upon how well they can learn. Staff provide effective support for pupils depending upon their individual needs. Emphasis is placed upon what is, and is not, appropriate behaviour and pupils are taught strategies to cope with their mixed emotions. This means pupils are increasingly involved in learning over time and many are able to return to mainstream education.
- Pupils have clear and easy to understand targets and many make good use of teachers' comments which indicate their successes and what they need to learn next. Best practice provides pupils with opportunities to return to previous work and make changes to improve it.
- Highly-trained teaching assistants contribute very well to learning. Working closely with teachers, they use a range of acquired skills to support learning at different levels including for those pupils who are disabled and or who have special educational needs, those in receipt of pupil premium funding and those who are falling behind with their work. Their contribution to learning helps to ensure that by the end of Year 6, the vast majority of pupils in receipt of extra help work at those levels expected for their age and are well prepared for their next stages in learning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- This is a warm and welcoming school, which has its pupils at its very heart. Pupils and parents take great pride in its friendliness and achievements. To reflect this one pupil said, 'Everybody helps everyone else and friends and teachers look after us.'
- Best behaviour is expected and pupils strive well to achieve this. They understand the rules and routines of the school behaving exceptionally well in lessons and about the building. Pupils understand the different forms bullying might take and talk readily about the learning in 'anti-bullying' weeks. Pupils feel that negative behaviour and bullying are rare and when it does occur any concerns are dealt with rapidly and successfully. Pupils understand well the strong code of conduct which staff apply rigorously. Parent responses support this view.
- Pupils have a strong voice in making decisions, they act as buddies and school councillors supporting their friends across the school. Pupils' ideas for developing the school are built into the school development plan so they too have a role in school improvement.
- Some pupils have particularly challenging behaviours when they arrive in school, including those who may be potentially vulnerable and those who enter the specialist additional resource unit. The school works closely with families to ensure that their children are in school, are well supported and are in the best position to learn successfully.
- Attendance is high and pupils enjoy coming to school.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher works very closely with senior leaders and governors towards continual improvement. There is a genuine shared commitment and the school's review of its performance is reflective and challenging. Its work as a lead initial teacher training school is widely acclaimed and used by other local schools. Senior leaders have roles and responsibilities within the local authority which in turn provides light touch support for the school.
- Performance management is key to successful staff development and progression. Leaders regularly check the progress of pupils and hold teachers to account. Actions to improve teaching and accelerate pupils' progress are well established. Promotion and salary awards are clearly linked to performance in teaching and how well leaders carry out their roles and responsibilities.
- A rigorous programme, carried out by senior leaders, checks the quality of teaching. Changes to

teaching staff and to senior leaders has required a closer look at pupil's achievement across the school. This together with improvements to the close tracking of pupils' progress have led to effective actions to address variations in teaching performance and are impacting well upon standards.

- Teachers' expertise is extended through a range of excellent professional development. Those in training, and those who are newly qualified, receive strong support from experienced staff which is improving the quality of teaching.
- Leaders have worked closely with staff to improve the quality of the assessment of pupils' work. Teachers make increasingly effective use of an achievement tracker to plan appropriate teaching strategies and support. Developments to improve progress in reading, writing and mathematics have been very effective reflected in the current rapid increase in pupils' progress.
- The good achievement of all pupils reflects the commitment of the school to ensure that no pupil is discriminated against. Success can be seen clearly in the progress of those who are disabled or who have special educational needs, those who access pupil premium funds and pupils in the specialist additional resource unit who perform as well as others in the school.
- The curriculum aims to enhance pupils' experiences and skills through considerable opportunities for pupils to extend their understanding of the world beyond the school and the local community. Pupils are encouraged to learn about different times and cultures through an exciting range of art, music and design. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding being central to how pupils engage and learn. Older pupils are encouraged and supported to extend their cultural understanding through visits and links to a range of countries around the world.
- The schools arrangements for the safeguarding of pupils meet statutory requirements and are an example of best practice.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are highly committed. They have open and honest relationships with the headteacher, senior leaders and staff whom they hold in high regard for the skills they bring to the school. They want the best for their pupils and work closely with staff to understand how effectively pupils are being challenged to achieve and how to move the school forward.
 - Governors understand the strengths of the school, as demonstrated in school data and evidence presented regarding the quality of teaching, and believe that the positive and happy atmosphere of the school is central to its success. They speak knowledgeably about actions to improve, for example reading, and the positive impact such actions have had on improving standards.
 - Finances, including the funding of performance related pay and the allocation of pupils premium funding, are well directed and governors monitor their impact on improving standards, including through the rewards provided for good teaching and the actions taken to tackle any underperformance.

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	108624
Local authority	North Tyneside
Inspection number	412515

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	363
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jackie Colclough
Headteacher	Alan Egdell
Date of previous school inspection	11 March 2009
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