

St Bede's Catholic Primary School

Popley Way, Basingstoke, Hampshire, RG24 9DX

Inspection dates

10–11 October 2013

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher's ambitious vision and the Christian mission underpin the school's very positive ethos. Senior and middle leaders, and the governing body, offer good support.
- Almost all parents who completed the survey would recommend the school to others.
- From starting points that are a little below those that are typical, pupils make good progress and achieve well.
- Attainment at the end of Year 6 has in recent years been well above average. The progress of current year groups is good; their attainment is on track to be above average.
- In recent years, attainment at the end of Year 2 has mostly been above average. The school's information shows that attainment is expected to improve further in 2013.
- Progress and achievement in the Reception Year is good in all areas of learning.
- Teaching is well planned and organised, and teachers mostly set a lively pace in lessons. Teaching assistants provide good support.
- High expectations and the school's caring ethos foster pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons, assemblies and around the school is excellent. They show very positive and mature attitudes to learning.
- Pupils feel entirely safe at school, and say that bullying is rare. Parents and members of staff unanimously agree that pupils are safe.
- Leaders regularly check the quality of teaching and learning, and carefully analyse data about pupils' progress, leading to accurate evaluation and good improvement planning.
- The stimulating curriculum engages pupils well. The broad out-of-school programme promotes pupils' personal development very successfully.
- The school does much to help parents to support their children's learning.
- Governors have a good understanding of the school's many strengths and few weaknesses. They support the leadership, but are confident also to challenge the school's performance.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- On occasions, tasks set for pupils of different abilities do not challenge every group well.
- The pace of learning is sometimes not brisk enough to help to sustain pupils' concentration.
- Teachers do not regularly ensure that pupils are highly productive in completing tasks by making good use of available time.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 18 lessons, of which two were joint observations with the headteacher and the assistant headteacher. Inspectors also heard a sample of pupils in Years 1 and 2 read.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, members of the school's staff, the chair and four other members of the governing body, and a telephone discussion took place with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors analysed the 78 responses that were recorded on the online survey (Parent View) by the end of the inspection, and spoke with small numbers of parents accompanying their children to school.
- Inspectors also took account of the 26 responses to the questionnaire for school staff.
- Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documents, including the school's own data on pupils' current attainment and progress, planning documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents relating to safeguarding, the pupil premium, and the curriculum.

Inspection team

Chris Grove, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Julie Sackett

Additional Inspector

Ken Bryan

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This primary school is larger than average.
- The school is situated in north-east Basingstoke and serves Catholic families within and beyond the parish of the Holy Ghost.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (which provides additional funding to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals) is well below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils or those who have special educational needs supported through school action is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of pupils for whom English is an additional language is well above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Among the school's accreditations are the Healthy Schools award and the Basic Skills Quality Mark.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of all teaching to that of the best by improving the extent to which teachers:
 - ensure that the tasks and questions set are consistently well matched to the prior attainment of the different groups of pupils
 - make sure that lessons are always well paced in order to sustain pupils' motivation
 - ensure that pupils know exactly how much they are expected to achieve in a given time so that they are more productive.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Across the school, pupils make good, and sometimes better, progress. Pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs, and the most able pupils, also make good progress, as do those supported by the pupil premium and those for whom English is an additional language.
- Members of staff have very high expectations of behaviour. All adults set excellent examples for pupils to follow. Older pupils act as first-class role-models for younger pupils.
- Since the previous inspection, pupils' attainment as measured by national tests at the end of Year 6 has risen annually, and has been well above average, particularly in mathematics, and especially in 2012. This represented outstanding progress.
- Preliminary information about performance in 2013 shows similar attainment in mathematics to 2012, and points to attainment in reading that is still well above average, and to attainment in writing that is above average.
- Inspection evidence and school information indicate that the attainment of present year groups is on track to be above average and that their current progress is good, but not outstanding.
- In recent years, pupils have mostly made good progress to reach above-average attainment by the end of Year 2. Early information about performance in 2013 indicates improvements in attainment in reading, writing and mathematics.
- When children first come to school, their knowledge and skills are a little below the levels typical for their age. They make good progress and achieve well to develop a secure foundation for later learning. By the end of the Reception Year, attainment in all areas regularly exceeds national expectations.
- Pupils take part very enthusiastically in sports and physical activities. For instance, pupils in Year 4 participated keenly in a gymnastics lesson, making good progress and greatly enjoying the physical challenges.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is small, and numbers vary considerably from year to year. This makes comparisons unreliable. In 2012, the gap between the attainment of eligible pupils and that of others narrowed markedly in English compared with 2011, but widened considerably in mathematics. The gap in performance in English equated to about half a term, but in mathematics to more than five terms.
- The school uses pupil premium funding appropriately, in pursuit of its commitment to promoting equal opportunities and to tackling discrimination. The funding has been used principally to provide additional teaching for potentially disadvantaged pupils, and to part-fund the employment of two assistants to support emotional literacy. Through careful tracking, the school has evidence of the good impact of spending on pupils' progress.

The quality of teaching is good

- The good quality of teaching, including in literacy and mathematics, results in pupils' good progress.
- The relationships between pupils and adults, and between pupils themselves, are excellent, and alongside the school's high expectations make an important contribution to the very positive climate for learning.
- The school has set clear expectations for teachers' planning. As a result, teachers plan lessons with clear purposes and criteria for successful learning, both of which they communicate well to pupils.
- Lesson planning regularly involves setting tasks matched to pupils' previous attainment, in order to provide appropriate levels of challenge. In a mathematics lesson in Year 6 about the properties of three-dimensional solids, for example, the well-judged match ensured that all groups made excellent progress. The more able were given a conceptually demanding task, and

the teacher's questions promoted their capacity for reasoning, while the teaching assistant used resources well to guide lower-attaining pupils to complete a less complex activity successfully.

- However, in a small minority of lessons, the match of tasks to pupils is not so well judged. Furthermore, teachers do not always match their questions well to different groups of pupils so as to provide appropriate challenge.
- Where teaching is good, lessons typically proceed at a brisk pace that engages pupils' interest well. However, in a few lessons, the pace occasionally slackens, leading to a loss of focus.
- In the Reception classes, children are well taught and are helpfully encouraged to develop greater independence. They quickly develop strong relationships with teachers and assistants. Discussions with them do much to promote their understanding and good speaking skills. Good use is made of the outdoor area, though there are sometimes missed opportunities, for instance to reflect the current national expectation that children will learn to count numbers from 10 to 20.
- The use of marking and target setting has improved. Marking is of good quality, and provides regular opportunities for pupils to respond to teachers' comments about improvement. The 'target ladders' in workbooks give pupils a clear view of their current attainment, and indicate what they need to do to reach a higher level.
- Not all teachers make consistently good use of time, especially when pupils are undertaking the tasks set for them. In particular, teachers sometimes do not clarify how much time pupils have to complete a task, or how much they are expected to achieve in the time available. Consequently, pupils are not always as productive as they could be.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils' very positive attitudes reflect the school's high expectations and caring ethos, leading to the particularly favourable climate for learning. Pupils make an excellent contribution to their own learning.
- Pupils feel secure and confident, and quickly develop mature attitudes to learning. They are very polite towards adults and other pupils, and are especially courteous to visitors. Without exception, parents who completed the online questionnaire agreed that their children are happy at school.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons is commendably positive, as shown by their well-developed listening skills and willing participation. Any minor loss of concentration is attributable a lapse in the pace of learning. In assemblies, pupils are reverential and respectful, and this contributes significantly to their strong spiritual and moral development.
- At breaktimes, pupils play amicably with others. At lunchtimes, they make sensible use of the small-play equipment available in the playground. In the hall, the calm and orderly atmosphere allows pupils to eat their meal in a relaxed and enjoyable way.
- Pupils understand the different forms that bullying may take, including racism and cyber bullying. They say that there have been no incidents of bullying of any sort. This is confirmed by the school's logs, which show no bullying or racist incidents, or serious misbehaviour. There have been no permanent or fixed-term exclusions.
- Parents who completed the survey were unanimous in agreeing that their children feel entirely safe at school. In their questionnaire responses, all members of staff strongly agreed about pupils' safety.
- Attendance is above average, with an improving trend over the last three years. Persistent absence is below average, and reflects pupils' marked enjoyment of school.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher communicates an ambitious vision, building on the strong Christian mission,

and this leads to the school's highly positive ethos. This effectively promotes pupils' personal and academic development, and equality of opportunity. School leaders and the governing body successfully involve staff in realising that vision. This is reflected in the unanimous expression of pride in the school evident in responses to the staff questionnaire. One wrote that, 'The staff work as a team, putting the children's interests first at all times.' Parents strongly support the school. All except one who took part in the survey would recommend it to others.

- The senior leadership team ensure teachers' accountability through half-termly meetings to review pupils' progress, and a regular cycle of activities, including observations, to monitor the quality of teaching and learning, resulting in pupils' good achievement. Self-evaluation is accurate, and leads to well-devised improvement planning, designed to further enhance the school's provision and pupils' achievement.
 - The broad and balanced curriculum realises the vision well, and successfully supports the development of pupils' literacy and mathematical skills. The Basic Skills Quality Mark award attests to the good provision. Links with the local Catholic secondary school enable some specialist teaching in French and information and communication technology (ICT). There is especially good enrichment through the wide range of sports clubs, which include hockey and cricket in addition to football and netball. Music is also a prominent feature. As well as a choir, pupils can learn to play instruments, including flute, clarinet, brass and drums. These sporting and musical opportunities, and other clubs such as those for art and drama, contribute strongly to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
 - Pupils enjoy twice-weekly sessions of physical education. Although the school has not yet received the new primary sports funding, it already promotes pupils' physical well-being effectively. For instance, it has arranged additional provision in gymnastics by a specialist teacher. Spending plans for the additional funding are well advanced, and include the enhancement of teachers' skills by the specialist. The school has gained the Healthy Schools award in recognition of its promotion of healthy lifestyles.
 - The school enjoys the strong support of parents, as is shown by their very positive responses to Parent View. Arrangements such as the reading link books, and the school's informative website, encourage parents to play an active role in their children's learning. The school also works in close partnership with others, including the local Catholic church, to support children and families.
 - The local authority is confident in the capacity of the school's leadership, and in the accuracy of its self-evaluation. Accordingly, it has provided no more than light-touch support.
 - Leaders maintain a rigorous focus on all aspects of child protection and safeguarding, which fully meet requirements. They are assiduous in ensuring support for pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable.
 - The capacity for improvement is demonstrated by the continuing good quality of teaching and of pupils' achievement, and the leadership team's effective self-evaluation. In addition to improvements in the use of marking and target setting, the school has convincingly addressed issues from the previous inspection, such as broadening pupils' understanding of other communities, nationally and globally.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body shows a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas needing improvement, and contributes positively to self-evaluation. Governors understand the implications of the national information about the school's performance and the quality of teaching. They recognise the importance of performance management, including their responsibility for the headteacher's appraisal, and have sought appropriate professional advice. Governors have assured themselves that staff performance is appropriately linked to salary progression. They understand the purpose of pupil premium funding, know how the funding is spent and about its impact on these pupils' progress. Governors understand the importance of ongoing training. As a result of training undertaken, they have improved their capacity to hold the school to account.
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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	116380
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	428855

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	403
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Tatam
Headteacher	Anthony Murray
Date of previous school inspection	28–29 January 2009
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