

St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School

Tewkesbury Lane, Milton Keynes, MK10 9PH

Inspection dates 26–27 June 2014

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Pupils experience outstanding teaching through an exciting and stimulating curriculum that motivates them to do well. As a result, pupils make rapid progress from very low starting points.
- The school provides a range of subjects that meet pupils' learning needs, with literacy and numeracy skills reinforced in other subjects.
- Pupils' confidence and self-esteem are enhanced through a wide range of activities offered by the school, including art and sporting experiences.
- Support is highly effective for pupils who speak English as an additional language and for pupils who join the school at other times than the usual start dates.
- Those pupils who are at an early stage of learning English quickly become confident in the language.
- Teachers and other adults have high expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- Pupils with disabilities and special educational needs are well provided for and supported extremely well in both their learning and development. This enables them to settle in quickly and to make good and sometimes rapid progress.
- Pupils' behaviour is excellent and so they are able to work without disruption. Pupils are very proud of their school.
- Pupils feel safe in school. The vast majority of parents agree.
- This is a caring school, with a strong ethos to care for each other.
- The good provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage provides a happy nurturing environment where the children are well cared for and make good progress.
- The senior leaders and subject leaders have an excellent oversight of pupils' progress and teachers' work.
- The governing body is very committed to the school and holds the school robustly to account for its performance.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is at the heart of the school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed parts of 20 lessons, several of which were jointly observed with members of the leadership team. In addition, inspectors made several short visits to lessons and observed a number of small groups of pupils taught by teaching assistants.
- Inspectors observed an assembly and heard pupils from Years 2 and 6 reading.
- Inspectors held meetings with two groups of pupils, including the school council.
- Inspectors spoke to four governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body, a representative from the local authority and staff, including senior and middle leaders.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents, including the school's data on pupils' current progress, planning and monitoring documents and records relating to behaviour, attendance and the safeguarding of children. The school's arrangements for spending the additional sports funding and pupil premium funding were also scrutinised.
- Questionnaires were analysed from 34 members of staff.
- Inspectors took account of the responses of 37 parents to the online Parent View questionnaire during the inspection, and inspectors also used the start of the day to talk to parents.

Inspection team

Sarah Jones, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Colin Lower

Additional inspector

Claudia Wade

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School is larger than the average primary school. It has increased in size since the last inspection from 329 to 480 pupils.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well above average, as is that whose first language is not, or believed not to be, English. In total, there are 32 different languages spoken at the school.
- Pupils' mobility is higher than average. There is a higher proportion of pupils than average arriving at or departing from the school at different times during the school year.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action or with a statement of special educational need is below average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. These pupils are supported by additional government funding known as pupil premium.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage comprises of a Nursery, where children attend part-time, and a Reception class.
- The school met the government's current floor standards in 2013, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The headteacher is a mentor to new headteachers in the local authority.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Close any remaining achievement gaps between groups of pupils by making sure teachers' marking always helps pupils to improve their work.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Children start in the Nursery class with skill levels well below those expected of their age, especially in communication and language development. The school has taken highly effective action to identify children in need of additional support to develop their language skills, by using targeted programmes to help improve these skills.
- Children in the Nursery and Reception classes are enthusiastic and motivated, and demonstrate very positive attitudes to their learning, which are nurtured and encouraged by all staff in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- The school's tracking of the current Year 6 groups shows a continuing improvement of pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils' progress has improved since the last inspection. Pupils, including the most able, are now making good and outstanding progress in all classes because there has been a relentless and successful focus on improving the quality of teaching and the overall achievement of all pupils.
- Pupils who are supported by additional funding are making good progress and in line with their peers in most classes. Where there is a difference, the gap is narrowing rapidly as a result of effective support.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make progress in line with that of their peers, because they get the support that they need. This reflects how well the school promotes equal opportunities.
- The learning needs of pupils who move to the school midterm with little or no English are rapidly assessed and their needs responded to well. They are well supported with both their learning and social development, enabling them to settle quickly.
- Pupils' reading skills are well developed across the school. Reading skills are taught effectively using phonics (learning letters and the sounds they make) and teachers make sure that pupils build on this good foundation and apply these skills in their written work. The excellent teaching of these skills ensures that by the end of Year 2 the large majority of the pupils have acquired the required standard.
- Pupils' learning is supported by the displays in the classroom, including 'learning walls' to support them when working independently. Pupils use the resources well to support their work.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- Teachers' subject knowledge is good. They use questions effectively to check pupils' understanding and to ask further questions to deepen the pupils' thinking.
- Teachers plan their work carefully to make sure pupils' learning is interesting and engaging. In a Year 6 lesson pupils were acting out a scene from Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. They enjoyed talking about the various characters and performed with confidence and accuracy.
- Pupils have a very clear understanding of what they are expected to learn during each lesson, and understand how each lesson links to what they have learnt previously. At the end of the lesson, pupils assess their progress against the success criteria shared at the start of the activity.
- Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and encourage pupils to work independently and try new challenges. Pupils say that teachers make the lessons fun and that they would like more challenges.
- Teaching promotes high levels of literacy. Teachers ensure that pupils use their understanding of grammar and punctuation to write lively and engaging pieces of work. This was observed in a Year 5 lesson when pupils wrote reports based on *The Highwayman*, some pupils proudly read their accounts to the inspector.
- Learning is purposeful, and as a result of a carefully planned curriculum, pupils have the opportunity to develop both their literacy and numeracy in different subjects. Since the last inspection the school has focused on improving teachers' mathematical subject knowledge and

opportunities for mathematics to be developed across other areas in the curriculum.

- The relationships between staff and pupils are very positive. Teachers show respect for their pupils and, in turn, pupils listen carefully and respond in a positive way, working hard and with enthusiasm.
- Teachers and teaching assistants use praise very effectively to encourage pupils to make contributions to class discussions. As a result, pupils are not afraid to answer questions or share their ideas.
- Adults in the Early Years Foundation Stage plan stimulating and fun activities that match the children's needs and interests. The outdoor area is shared between Nursery and Reception and at times children work alongside each other. During the inspection children were seen using sand and water to assist their understanding of capacity.
- Teaching assistants are used effectively to support pupils to help them learn and improve their work. They make sure that all pupils are very well involved in all activities. They have a very good understanding of the needs of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, which they use to both support and challenge these pupils, so that they make excellent progress.
- When pupils were asked what helps them learn, they responded, 'When our books are marked with helpful comments.' There is evidence of much good marking. However, on a few occasions pupils would benefit from additional support with how they can improve their work and what they need to do next.
- A wide use of peer- and self-assessment helps reinforce learning, by providing pupils with an opportunity to reflect on their own learning and that of others to identify errors and next steps.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. This reflects the school's strong emphasis on spiritual and moral values. Pupils are very proud of their school and they are friendly and welcoming to visitors.
- The school's high expectations for spiritual development are evident throughout the school, including through collective worship and access to the chapel during break and lunchtime.
- Pupils have a positive attitude to their learning and are eager to do well. Pupils work together well and enjoy the lessons. They say teachers make lessons fun and 'help you to come out of 'your shell''.
- The behaviour of pupils at playtime is exemplary. They play well together, making good use of the wide range of play equipment and support from sport coaches, deployed through additional sports funding. Some pupils also benefit from the Playzone provision when they receive additional emotional support and care.
- Pupils take on extra responsibilities readily. For example, they are eager participants in the school council, children's chaplaincy and playground buddies at lunchtime, which includes older pupils engaging the younger pupils in activities in the playground.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils say they feel extremely safe and well cared for by all the adults in the school.
- Pupils are well informed about all types of bullying, including cyber bullying. Pupils say bullying is very rare and that should it occur, it is quickly and effectively resolved.
- Attendance is consistently above the national average for primary schools.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The senior leadership team, with the support of the members of the governing body, have provided clarity in their direction to move the school forward. Leaders have successfully secured improvements in teaching and in pupils' achievement, supporting the school's overall effectiveness from good to outstanding.

- Systems to check the progress pupils are making are both rigorous and effective in providing the best support for pupils in all year groups. The tracking information is used exceptionally effectively in pupils' progress meetings to identify any pupils who are at risk of falling behind with their learning.
- The school has worked hard to improve the quality of teaching. Teachers' performance is managed effectively as senior and subject leaders observe lessons regularly to identify areas for improvement.
- The rich curriculum widens the experience of pupils and creates many opportunities for them to develop their understanding of their community and the wider world. For example, in an art lesson based on the class topic of Africa, pupils created illustrations based on the illustrator and storyteller Baba Wagué Diakité. To help set the scene, quiet African music was playing in the background, helping pupils to work in a calm, purposeful way.
- The pupils enjoy a wide range of after-school activities as part of St Bernadette's University, which include Japanese club, music club and a range of sports clubs.
- The additional sports funding provided by the government has enabled the school to employ specialist coaches to provide additional sporting provision in and after school and to provide training for staff to develop their expertise. It has also enabled the school to extend the opportunities for competitive sports for the pupils.
- The local authority provide light-touch support only. They also deploy the headteacher to mentor new headteachers within the local authority.
- The school's systems for safeguarding and ensuring all pupils have an equal opportunity to succeed are good. Pupil premium funding is used effectively to support those pupils for whom it is intended, for example, through the work of a learning mentor. The support for vulnerable pupils is outstanding and has a big impact on pupils, especially those with English as an additional language who are settling into new school routines.
- The school has a good partnership with parents. A few parents did comment that, although they are well informed at times, some information is 'last minute' and they would appreciate a little more notice.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body is very skilled and able to both challenge and support school leaders well. They know the school and understand the priorities for the school to continue to improve. They take regular opportunities throughout the year to meet and review the performance of the school and are actively involved in the evaluation of the school's work and in development planning. Governors have attended training on analysing data organised by the local authority, and they know where the school sits in relation to schools nationally. Governors make sure that statutory responsibilities are met; safeguarding requirements are in place and effective. Governors recognise the link between teachers' performance and salary progression. Governors carefully monitor the school finances, including how the school is using the pupil premium to improve pupils' overall achievement.

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	134318
Local authority	Milton Keynes
Inspection number	444110

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	456
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Richard Gordon
Headteacher	Maxine Clewlow
Date of previous school inspection	5 May 2010
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