

St Bridget's Catholic Primary School

Capesthorpe Road, Fearnhead, Warrington, Cheshire, WA2 0ER

Inspection dates 17–18 June 2015

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher is highly ambitious for the school. She is effectively supported by the two assistant headteachers, staff and the governing body. This is having a positive impact on teaching and achievement.
- Senior leaders including governors have an accurate view of the school's strengths and provide a clear direction for further development. They have the expertise and determination to ensure that the school continues to improve.
- The curriculum is good; it includes memorable events for pupils to enjoy and staff foster close links with schools in other countries.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted successfully. Pupils' understanding of British values prepares them well for life in modern Britain.
- Behaviour is excellent in and around school. Pupils enjoy their work and like their teachers. Pupils feel safe because of the effective care provided by staff.
- Attendance has improved and is now similar to the national level.
- Teaching is at least good and its impact is sometimes outstanding. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together and classrooms are vibrant, harmonious places. The marking of pupils' work is of a high quality.
- From low starting points most pupils, including those who have any additional needs, achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Provision in the early years is good. Leadership in the early years is focused and purposeful. This, together with good quality teaching, ensures that all children make at least good progress from their individual starting points.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The quality of learning and teaching is not yet consistently outstanding because teachers provide activities that do not always challenge the most able pupils well enough.
- Teachers do not always insist that pupils produce enough, well presented work, particularly in upper Key Stage 2.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all classes taught by teachers and in activities taken by teaching assistants. A walk around the school to look at learning also took place.
- Inspectors met with two groups of pupils and observed and spoke to pupils during lessons, play times and at lunchtime. They also listened to pupils reading.
- Meetings were held with parents, staff, senior leaders and managers, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors considered a range of documents, including the school's analysis of how well it is doing, the school development plan, information about pupils' progress, checks on the quality of teaching, minutes of governing body meetings, and records relating to attendance and safeguarding. Inspectors also examined work in pupils' books.
- Inspectors took account of 15 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and of a summary of the responses to a parental questionnaire recently distributed by the school.
- Inspectors also considered responses from 24 staff to the inspection questionnaire.

Inspection team

Louise Murphy, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Christine Howard

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is smaller than most primary schools.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium (additional funding for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority) is well above the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below the national level.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below average, as is the proportion of pupils at the very early stages of learning to speak English as an additional language.
- The school provides full-time places for children in the Reception classes.
- Two new teachers have joined the staff since September 2014.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and learning so that more pupils make more than expected progress by making sure that:
 - Teachers provide activities that consistently challenge the most able pupils to think hard
 - Teachers give pupils in upper Key Stage 2 enough opportunity to write at length and expect a high standard in the way pupils present their work.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management

are good

- The headteacher has a clear view of how successful the school can be and knows the school well. She has used her expertise to maintain good-quality teaching and learning across the school since the previous inspection. She is well supported by governors, senior leaders and staff. Leadership of teaching is good. Overall, the recommendations from the previous report have been tackled successfully indicating that the school is in a good position to continue to improve.
- Middle leaders fulfil their roles effectively. Staff work together in teams to lead subjects, they check on how well pupils are doing in their areas of responsibility and reliably support teachers and teaching assistants to improve their practice.
- This is a very caring school. Behaviour is excellent; any form of discrimination is effectively tackled and good relations are successfully fostered. Leaders have ensured a strong focus on British values. For example, pupils develop an understanding of democracy through the workings of the school's council. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The curriculum provides a good range of interesting topics and helps promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. There are trips and visitors linked to topic themes, which provide extra excitement and motivation for pupils. There are also well-established links with a number of schools in other countries, which help to give pupils a detailed insight into how children in different parts of the world live.
- The extra funding the school receives to support disadvantaged pupils is used well. It provides academic support through small-group learning sessions, as well as personal and emotional support through the help of the family support worker. This confirms the school's commitment to making sure that all pupils enjoy the same opportunities to succeed.
- The primary sports funding is used effectively. This helps to provide extra sporting activities taught by qualified staff. In addition teacher training has supported school staff to teach a wider range of sporting activities to a higher standard. The numbers of pupils taking part in sports has increased and the school now takes part in a number of inter-school competitions.
- Safeguarding is highly effective because it is given high priority. Governors check to ensure all statutory requirements are met and that staff and pupils are kept very safe.
- The local authority provides effective light-touch support for this good school as the skill, determination and expertise of school leaders is recognised.

■ The governance of the school:

- The governance of the school is highly effective and governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and where improvements are needed. Governors are kept well informed through comprehensive and regular reports and presentations from school leaders, staff and pupils. Members of the governing body have an accurate overview of the quality of teaching and know about teachers' performance management systems. They are involved in setting performance targets for the headteacher and fully understand the actions taken to reward good teaching and tackle underperformance. Governors check that they are up to date with training and know how to analyse information on pupils' progress, including nationally published data. This enables them to hold school leaders effectively to account for standards at the school.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- The exemplary way in which pupils behave plays a major role in contributing toward the calm, friendly atmosphere of the school. Pupils are courteous, polite and show great respect for each other and the adults around them. High-quality relationships between adults and pupils are evident around the school and pupils say that they really enjoy their school work because teachers make it exciting and fun.
- Pupils show an incredibly positive attitude towards learning. There is always a good show of hands to answer questions in the classroom. What is more, pupils will check the learning prompts displayed in each classroom to help themselves and they will also try to help each other when they are stuck.
- Playtimes are highly enjoyable because pupils get on well together and have a range of activities to keep them busy. Pupils relish the opportunity to take on responsibilities and make a contribution towards their

'fantastic school'. For example, the sports council are keen to have a climbing frame in the playground for everyone to enjoy. They are organising entries to a competition to win the money to fund the purchase.

- Parents who spoke with an inspector agreed that behaviour is excellent. Pupils know that they are expected to follow the golden rules. Pupils understand and can sensitively explain why a very small number of pupils do not always behave as well as they should. They agree, however, that poor behaviour is not allowed to distract others from learning.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding.
- Pupils are very aware of how to keep themselves safe. For example, the junior safety officers lead assemblies reminding pupils to look left and right on the road and have also organised a competition to design a bicycle helmet. They make sure that road safety is always high on the agenda.
- Pupils are fully informed about different types of bullying and behaviour logs confirm that bullying is rare. Following anti-bullying week pupils decided to develop a new pupil role, that of 'Hate Crime Champion' to ensure that no bullying takes place at Saint Bridget's. School councillors interviewed applicants to make sure that the right candidates were selected for the job.
- Pupils say that they can talk over any concern with an adult. The pastoral team is particularly effective in supporting pupils and their families when the need arises.
- Most pupils arrive on time for school and attendance is improving and is similar to national levels. This reflects pupils' enjoyment of school life at St Bridget's.

The quality of teaching

is good

- The quality of teaching is good overall and sometimes its impact on learning and achievement is outstanding. This is confirmed by the work seen in pupils' books and the school's records of pupils' progress, which demonstrate that pupils are taught well and supported to make progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Classrooms are vibrant places in which to learn and include a range of resources and prompts that help pupils with their learning. The excellent relationships between pupils and staff encourage exemplary attitudes to learning.
- Reading is taught effectively across the school. Younger pupils get off to a good start with their reading and successfully learn to match letters and the sounds they make. A new method of small group reading has been introduced and is having a positive impact on reading standards in Key Stages 1 and 2.
- Pupils enjoy a wide range of opportunities to practise their writing skills. This is evident from the good-quality work seen in English books and the pieces of writing seen in science and topic books. During the inspection Year 1 pupils produced fact sheets about ladybirds; to do this they carried out research using both books and the internet. Staff encouraged pupils to record as much as they could during the lesson and most pupils completed a highly informative well presented piece of work. Although the quality of writing in upper Key Stage 2 is good pupils do not always have enough opportunity to write at length.
- Mathematics is taught well across all year groups. Pupils are given creative and imaginative problem-solving activities to encourage them to use their mathematical skills and understanding. For example, younger pupils working in the well kept outdoor allotment area had to use their calculation skills to share 150 bulbs between seven classes. Through such activities pupils are encouraged to use basic mathematical skills in real-life situations. However, teachers do not always insist that pupils use a ruler to draw shapes and charts or present their work well, particularly in upper Key Stage 2.
- Monitoring of pupils' progress provides information for teachers from which they are able to plan learning activities. Pupils frequently learn in small group sessions lead by highly skilled teaching assistants. The work provided during these sessions is well matched to pupils' abilities and effectively builds upon what they already know and can do. However, at times the work provided for the most able pupils when they are part of the whole class is not always challenging enough to make them think hard.
- Teachers mark pupils' work rigorously; they check that pupils follow the good advice that they are given so that pupils are able to improve their work.

The achievement of pupils**is good**

- Across Key Stages 1 and 2 pupils achieve well and make at least good progress from their starting points in reading, writing and mathematics. In the 2014 national tests the attainment of pupils at the end of Year 2 dipped to below-average levels in reading, writing and mathematics. However, the pupils in that group made good progress from their individual starting points. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is most often broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Results of the 2014 Year 6 national tests show that the proportions of pupils who made the progress expected of them in reading, writing and mathematics was similar to the national average. The proportions of pupils who made more than the progress expected of them in the same subjects was above national levels.
- The proportion of Year 1 pupils who reach the required standard in the national screening check for phonics (letters and the sounds they make) is above the national average. Older pupils read well and are able to discuss their favourite books.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are given excellent support by teachers and very well trained teaching assistants. Their additional needs are met well because they are identified early and effective interventions are put into place; external agencies are consulted when required and progress is accurately checked. The same high-quality provision is available for pupils who join the school later than expected and those pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- In the 2014 end of Key Stage 2 national tests the proportion of pupils who reached the higher Level 5 in reading, writing and mathematics was broadly average. Overall the most able pupils make good progress because they regularly work on more challenging activities in small groups outside the classroom.
- Disadvantaged pupils leaving school at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2014 attained at approximately one year ahead of their Year 6 classmates in reading and writing and one term ahead in mathematics. Compared to non-disadvantaged pupils nationally, disadvantaged pupils at school attained at approximately one term behind in reading and one term ahead in writing. While attainment in mathematics was very similar to the standards met by non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.
- In the same tests the proportion of disadvantaged pupils achieving more than the expected levels of progress in reading, writing and mathematics compared favourably with other pupils in their class and non-disadvantaged pupils nationally. Current data shows very little difference in achievement between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils in their class. This is because the school swiftly puts effective strategies into place to narrow any gaps.

The early years provision**is good**

- Most children start school with skills and knowledge that are below typical for their age, though this does vary year on year. Progress is at least good and some children achieve exceptionally well, with all catching-up quickly with their learning. However, because of low individual starting points fewer than half of the children are fully prepared for the learning they will meet as they move into Year 1.
- Children join St Bridget's from a range of settings, which staff visit to check children's skills before they start in the Reception class. However, school leaders now recognise that they should collect more information from parents regarding what their children are able to do on entry to school.
- The early years environment is vibrant and well resourced both indoors and out. Both areas cover all of the seven areas of learning and there is a range of activities in place to effectively develop children's early reading and writing skills. There are also plenty of opportunities for children to investigate and explore.
- Behaviour is excellent and the caring staff make sure that children are kept safe and secure. Children enjoy working with their friends, during the inspection a range of super heroes were helping each other to do up their costumes before they went off to save the world. Children were also seen taking turns, following routines, selecting activities and helping to tidy up.
- The new early years leader has joined Reception class this year and is successfully making sure that the quality of teaching and learning is at least good and continues to improve. Work collected in children's records of achievements known as 'learning journeys' is used to identify progress. This enables the well-led staff team to plan interesting and exciting activities that build carefully on what children know and can do.

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	111377
Local authority	Warrington
Inspection number	461712

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	212
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Gloria Pendergast
Headteacher	Ceri Dobson
Date of previous school inspection	3 November 2011
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