

St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School

Tile Barn Close, Cove, Farnborough, Hampshire GU14 8LS

Inspection dates

20–21 February 2018

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Pupils do not make good progress during key stage 2, particularly in reading and mathematics.
- Many pupils in key stage 2 do not reach the standards of which they are capable, particularly the most able, disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities.
- Leaders' work to improve teaching and pupils' outcomes has not yet achieved significant improvement.
- Governors have not been effective in holding school leaders to account. Governors' checks on aspects of the school's work are not thorough enough.
- The quality of teaching is not consistently strong across the school, reducing the overall quality of pupils' learning. This has been linked, in part, to many changes of staff over time.
- Teachers' assessment of pupils' learning, although beginning to improve, lacks rigour.
- Until recently, leaders have not given sufficient attention to developing all aspects of the school's curriculum.
- Extra support and challenge for the most able, for disadvantaged pupils and for those who have SEN and/or disabilities are not consistently effective.

The school has the following strengths

- The executive headteacher has brought clear vision and direction. She and the head of school are working effectively together to bring about improvement. They have a secure understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- Children make a strong start in the early years because leadership and teaching are good. Pupils continue to make good progress in key stage 1.
- A strong Christian ethos is evident throughout the school. Pupils are polite and friendly. They treat each other and adults with respect.
- Pupils' attendance is above the national average, and improving, because of the close links between families and the school.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve progress in reading and mathematics in key stage 2 for all groups of pupils so that a higher proportion reach the expected standard, and the most able pupils consistently reach the higher standards, by the end of Year 6.
- Improve teaching throughout the school so that this is consistently effective by ensuring that:
 - teachers demonstrate high expectations of what pupils can achieve, particularly the most able, disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities
 - teachers have a good understanding of pupils' different starting points and their progress, and provide suitable teaching and activities
 - teachers ensure that pupils read suitably challenging books
 - mathematics teaching provides regular opportunities for pupils to develop their problem-solving and reasoning skills
 - teaching assistants provide effective additional support for pupils
 - teaching strengthens pupils' skills and understanding effectively in subjects other than English and mathematics.
- Increase the effectiveness of leadership, including governance, by:
 - strengthening the skills of subject leaders to develop teaching and the curriculum in order to improve pupils' achievement
 - sharply evaluating the impact of leaders' improvement work on pupils' progress to direct further improvement work accurately
 - improving governors' checks on the school's performance, including safeguarding administration and procedures, so that governors effectively challenge and support leaders to continually improve the school's effectiveness.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Over time, leaders have not ensured that pupils achieve consistently good outcomes. Leaders and governors did not respond effectively to the decline in key stage 2 outcomes in recent years. Unsuccessful attempts to recruit a new headteacher in 2017 resulted in an unsettled period for the school.
- Following her appointment in November 2017, the interim executive headteacher immediately put in place well-founded initiatives which are beginning to bring about some improvement. Her ambitious vision and supportive way of working have been welcomed by leaders, governors and staff. All leaders now have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They know which aspects of the school's performance require improvement, particularly in teaching.
- The executive headteacher monitors teaching regularly, challenging underperformance and ensuring that staff receive relevant training. As a result, teaching is beginning to improve.
- The head of school ably supports the executive headteacher's vision. He has provided stability and leadership for the school during a time of significant change. This has been appreciated by all members of the school community, including parents and carers.
- Until recently, subject leaders did not have a meaningful role in the school's improvement. After helpful training, these leaders are now starting to play their part, for example by checking work in pupils' books. However, this development is not yet firmly established.
- The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) has astutely identified the precise needs of some pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and ensures that additional funding is used to support these pupils effectively. However, the scope of the current SENCo role is limited, including opportunities for the SENCo to improve teaching and additional support for these pupils.
- Since January 2017, the local authority has intervened to provide comprehensive support and challenge, including through the appointment of the interim executive headteacher and recruitment of experienced governors. Early signs of improvement are evident as a result, particularly in teaching, assessment and subject leadership.
- Until recently, leaders and governors did not monitor the impact of additional support provided through pupil premium funding on the progress of disadvantaged pupils. Leaders have recently introduced regular checks to see how well disadvantaged pupils are doing. Leaders are now starting to use this information to inform how additional support is targeted.
- The school makes effective use of additional government funding for sport. Specialist coaches work alongside teachers to improve their practice in teaching physical education.
- Leaders did not respond in a timely way to previous national curriculum and assessment changes. At the beginning of this school year, leaders introduced a

relevant curriculum across the school, which is in the early stages of implementation.

- Leaders ensure that pupils have access to a wide range of sport, music and drama. All pupils across the school have the opportunity to perform to a range of different audiences, for example parents, the church congregation and the local community. Pupils enjoy taking part in a large number of sporting competitions and make good use of local sports facilities. There is an increasing range of interesting visits to places such as museums and the seaside. These are linked appropriately to the developing curriculum and are greatly valued and enjoyed by pupils.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted effectively. The school celebrates and embraces diversity through the rich mix of the ethnic backgrounds of its pupils. Speakers drawn from the school's families and local community help pupils understand a range of faiths and cultures. As a result, pupils understand British values and demonstrate a strong sense of responsibility and appreciation of right and wrong.

Governance of the school

- Until recently, governors did not challenge school leaders robustly to improve outcomes for pupils. Governors did not routinely monitor all aspects of the school nor did they evaluate the school's performance or analyse information about pupils' progress systematically.
- Governors now have an accurate view of the strengths of the school and the areas which require improvement. The recently reformed governing body is beginning to take firm action to improve both the quality of education for pupils and its own effectiveness. The new chair of the governing body and other new governors have brought valuable expertise. Recent training for governors has provided a better understanding of their statutory responsibilities, helpfully informing their developing challenge and support for school leaders. As a result of these recent changes, governing body minutes show an increasingly rigorous level of challenge to school leaders.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. In the past, governors have not routinely checked the administration of some of these processes but they are now improving their oversight. Governors worked promptly with the interim executive headteacher to secure the school site and ensure that visitors are checked carefully on entry. One parent reported, 'The school is now very secure, which puts everyone at rest.'
- Leaders ensure that staff receive regular and appropriate safeguarding training. Consequently, staff understand fully their responsibilities to ensure that pupils remain safe at school and how to manage any concerns.
- Due to strong relationships and the caring Christian ethos that permeates the school, there is a clear culture of vigilance and care. Leaders act promptly on information received, working closely with the relevant external agencies and other professionals to ensure the safety of pupils in their care.

- Pupils said that they feel safe in school, and almost all parents who responded to Parent View confirmed that their children feel happy and safe. Pupils have frequent opportunities to learn about staying safe, for example in learning about road safety and how to avoid risks online.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is not consistently good. The large number of changes of staff over the last year has exacerbated this issue.
- For some time, until very recently, teachers' assessment of pupils' learning has not been consistently reliable. As a result, teaching and the work set for pupils have not promoted pupils' good progress, particularly in key stage 2. Recent training has improved staff skills in assessing pupils' progress, although this improvement is not yet fully established.
- In key stage 1, effective phonics teaching contributes well to pupils' evident strong progress in reading. Pupils use their phonics knowledge to sound out words successfully, and teachers match reading books closely to pupils' abilities and interests. Helpfully, pupils read widely at school and are encouraged to read at home through regular home-school communication.
- In key stage 2, pupils are not provided with consistently helpful reading opportunities. Reading books are not reliably matched to pupils' abilities, limiting pupils' progress.
- Teachers do not always follow the school's policy for providing feedback to pupils and marking pupil's work. As a result, pupils are not consistently helped to improve their work and their misunderstandings are not reliably corrected.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve, and for the quality of pupils' work, are not consistently high. Where teaching is most effective, pupils are stimulated to produce excellent work. However, when activities set for pupils are not matched closely enough to their needs, or where expectations are not high, pupils' attention wanes, sometimes leading to careless work.
- In the early years, and for older pupils in key stage 2, teaching assistants provide helpful pastoral and learning support to groups of pupils in class, and individually for some pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. However, this intervention is not effective throughout the school.
- Teachers are starting to use the newly introduced curriculum framework to provide opportunities for pupils to apply their knowledge and skills across a range of subjects. As a result, pupils are beginning to find their wider learning engaging. However, leaders recognise that this work is not yet fully developed.
- Work in the mathematics exercise books of older pupils shows that teaching provides the opportunities expected by the national mathematics curriculum, including mathematical reasoning and problem-solving. However, this is not the case throughout key stage 2, limiting some pupils' progress.
- Teachers set homework in line with the school's policy. Relating to the new curriculum arrangements, teachers also set extended activities through their engaging learning projects which expand pupils' skills and understanding. Parents value the opportunities

to share in and celebrate their children's learning at events such as the 'science fair' and 'tomb raider'.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils are friendly and confident.
- The school's strong Christian values are deeply embedded in the school. Pupils and staff show compassion, and strive to live by the school's mission statement, which is to show God's love, for example in the policy created with key stage 1 pupils of 'kind hands, kind feet'.
- Pupils enjoy the responsibilities they are offered, including opportunities to be involved in different committees. However, pupils express frustration caused by a lack of regular meetings and guidance to help them fulfil these roles.
- Pupils report that bullying is very rare in school but, if there are any unpleasant incidents, they are quickly sorted out. Pupils confidently told inspectors that they have learned a lot from the school's recent assemblies about bullying.
- Pupils show understanding and respect for each other's differences, encouraged by their learning through the school's personal, social, health and economic education programme. One pupil commented, 'We respect everyone.'

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. During the inspection, pupils were polite and friendly to the inspection team. Behaviour around the school is calm and orderly.
- Pupils report that behaviour has improved. This is because of the adults' consistently high expectations for pupils' behaviour and the work underway to improve the quality of teaching. Consequently, pupils usually focus on their learning in classes and there is a purposeful atmosphere across the school.
- Leaders use fixed-term exclusions in a measured way, and only when specialist support has not had the desired impact. In a number of cases, it has served to help improve behaviour or intensify support.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. Their attendance is above the national average and has improved from the same period last year. Leaders have introduced stricter procedures around unauthorised absences, which have led to increased attendance in individual cases. The school's intensive work with families and higher expectations for pupils have led to a marked increase in the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who speak English as an additional language.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils' outcomes require improvement because too few pupils make consistently good

progress, particularly in key stage 2. As a result, in recent years, the proportion of Year 6 pupils achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics overall has been consistently below the national figure.

- During key stage 2, pupils' progress in reading and mathematics is particularly slow. Consequently, pupils are not well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Pupils make better progress in key stage 1, building on their strong start in the early years. The most recent Year 2 outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics show the proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standard to be broadly average. Notably, the proportion of pupils exceeding the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics was slightly above the national average.
- Key stage 1 pupils make good progress in phonics, helpfully supporting their positive achievement in reading and writing.
- The work in current key stage 2 pupils' exercise books shows that recent improvements to the quality of teaching are starting to have a positive impact on pupils' progress. The work of the older pupils in key stage 2 is particularly promising when compared with national expectations. However, work in the books of younger pupils in key stage 2 shows less consistent improvement.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils remains a concern, despite recent improvement. These pupils are not yet catching up from their lower starting points.
- While some older pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and those in the early years are making good progress, this is not consistently the case across the school.
- Most-able pupils in key stage 2 do not make the progress they are capable of, particularly in reading and mathematics. The low outcomes these pupils achieved in the 2017 national assessments reflect the inconsistent expectations and challenge provided as they moved through key stage 2. Productive work is being done to introduce sufficient challenge for current most-able pupils, but this is in its early stages.
- Pupils' skills and understanding in subjects other than English and mathematics are undeveloped, resulting from weaknesses in the curriculum over time. Effective steps are being taken now to broaden pupils' experience, but this work is not yet well developed.

Early years provision

Good

- The early years is well led and managed. Staff work well together for the benefit of the children's learning and development. Leaders' evaluation of the effectiveness of the early years provision is accurate.
- Consistently strong teaching and careful provision help children make rapid progress in all areas of their learning. The proportion of children who achieve a good level of development at the end of Reception has been higher than the national average for the past two years. This provides children with a secure foundation for learning when they enter key stage 1.
- Systems for tracking children's progress are well developed in Reception. As a result, teachers are able to plan effectively for the needs of individual children. Parents report that they are very happy with the education and care their children receive in the early

years.

- Indoors and outdoors, adults provide a good range of activities for children which enable their rich learning opportunities, for example sand and water play, construction and an area set aside for writing. These opportunities encourage children to learn successfully, whether with others or alone. For example, inspectors observed children happily using their phonics knowledge to find active words such as 'nod' and 'hop' and then demonstrating their understanding of these words by doing the action.
- Children are happy and safe in the early years. Adults build strong relationships with parents. The leader manages children's transition into the school effectively from a large number of different pre-school providers. The well-thought-through arrangements for starting school are valued by parents, who report that their children settle quickly.
- Adults have high expectations for the children's behaviour. As a result, children follow safety rules and move around the setting with ease and confidence. They listen carefully to the instructions given by adults. Inspectors observed a small, adult-led group of children working with great concentration and purpose to create play food.
- Skilful questioning by staff enables children to use and apply what they have learned well. Children confidently responded to adults when asked to count to 10 and when practising writing letters of the alphabet.
- Children's work and records of their assessment show how they are improving their concentration and their ability to write and control a pencil or crayon. As a result, the standard of boys' writing, which historically has been lower than that of girls, is now improving.

School details

Unique reference number	116391
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10041458

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 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	332
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lisa Roy
Headteacher	Paula Dix
Telephone number	01252 548 123
Website	www.st-bernadettes.hants.sch.uk
Email address	head@st-bernadettes.hants.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	14–15 May 2014

Information about this school

- This school is slightly larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is higher than average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is broadly average.
- The school does not meet the current government floor standards for the percentage of pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Since the last inspection, there have been changes to the leadership of the school. Following the retirement of the previous headteacher in April 2017, the deputy headteacher led the school until the appointment of the current interim executive headteacher in November 2017. The executive headteacher works at the school three days a week.
- The school meets the Department for Education's definition of a coasting school based

on key stage 2 academic performance results in 2015, 2016 and 2017.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching throughout the school, including with leaders.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior leaders and subject leaders.
- Inspectors met with the governing body, including the vice-chair of governors.
- Inspectors met with pupils to discuss their views about the school and heard them read. The views of the small number of pupils who responded to Ofsted’s online pupil survey were noted.
- The lead inspector held a telephone discussion with a representative of the local authority.
- The views of parents were taken into account by analysing 65 responses to Ofsted’s online questionnaire, Parent View, and 64 additional free-text comments. Inspectors also spoke informally with parents at the start of the second day of the inspection.
- Inspectors considered the views of staff by analysing 12 responses to Ofsted’s staff survey.
- Inspectors scrutinised documentation, including leaders’ evaluation of the school’s effectiveness, minutes of governing body meetings and notes of external visits carried out by the local authority.
- Inspectors scrutinised the school’s records on current pupils’ progress, behaviour and attendance. Safeguarding procedures were also reviewed, including arrangements for keeping pupils safe and for recruiting staff.

Inspection team

Frances Nation, lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Theresa Phillips	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Joyce Lydford	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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