

St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School

Narrow Lane, Brownhills, Walsall, West Midlands WS8 6HX

Inspection dates

23–24 January 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Leaders and governors have been too slow to improve outcomes for pupils in key stage 2. Pupils' progress in reading and mathematics is inadequate in some year groups.
- By the end of key stage 2, pupils make significantly less progress than pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school's system for checking on pupils' learning, while improving, is not wholly reliable. As a result, leaders and teachers do not have an accurate understanding of how well pupils are doing.
- Leaders do not make thorough checks on the quality of teaching. They have not addressed weak teaching with enough urgency or rigour.
- Until recently, governors have not held leaders sufficiently to account for pupils' progress.
- Teachers in key stage 2 do not make effective use of assessment information to plan work to meet pupils' needs.
- Teachers do not check on pupils' learning in lessons consistently. As a result, they do not identify pupils' misunderstandings quickly enough to enable pupils to make good progress.
- Teachers do not plan work that is challenging enough for the most able pupils. Consequently, these pupils make less progress than they should in key stages 1 and 2.
- Leaders and governors do not evaluate the impact of their use of pupil premium funding precisely enough. Disadvantaged pupils make less progress than other pupils nationally.

The school has the following strengths

- Leadership in the early years is informed and children make good progress.
- Leadership of teaching and learning in key stage 1 is effective. As a result, pupils make good progress and achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2.
- The curriculum is broad and interesting. As a result, pupils enjoy learning.
- Pupils are polite and feel safe at school. They behave well and have positive attitudes to their work.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership and management, by:
 - setting out plans which address the school's weaknesses and enable leaders and governors to check effectively if the actions taken have been successful
 - ensuring that leaders at all levels take effective action to improve pupils' progress in reading and mathematics in key stage 2
 - making regular and thorough checks on the quality of teaching and providing clear feedback to teachers on how to improve their practice in order to accelerate pupils' progress
 - holding teachers to account more effectively for the quality of their teaching and the progress pupils are making
 - ensuring that information about pupils' learning and the progress they are making is accurate and used to inform teaching
 - evaluating the impact of pupil premium funding on the achievement of disadvantaged pupils
 - analysing attendance information to check for any patterns
 - ensuring that governors hold senior leaders rigorously to account for pupils' progress.

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, and ensure that all groups of pupils make good progress, particularly in key stage 2, by:
 - making sure there is consistency in the standard of teaching and learning across all year groups and all subjects
 - making sure that all teachers having consistently high expectations of what pupils can do and the progress they can make
 - making accurate assessments of pupils' learning and using this information to plan work that matches the different needs and abilities of pupils
 - checking pupils' learning in lessons and addressing errors and misunderstandings swiftly, particularly in mathematics
 - developing the quality of questioning to deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding
 - providing more opportunities for the most able pupils to work at greater depth.

- Continue to improve provision in the early years by ensuring that:
 - assessment information is fully informed by children’s work and achievements
 - all staff manage children’s behaviour in line with the school’s agreed policy.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Over the past two years, leaders have not secured consistently good teaching across key stage 2. Consequently, pupils have made significantly less progress than they should in this part of the school.
- Pupils' low progress in 2017 was a shock to leaders and governors because they had not thoroughly checked the progress of pupils as they moved through the school. Leaders have responded by introducing a new and improved approach for checking pupils' progress. However, there is still some variability in the accuracy of teachers' assessments.
- Senior leaders have not carried out regular checks on the quality of teaching. They have not addressed weak teaching with enough urgency or rigour. As a result, the quality of teaching in key stage 2 has declined since the previous inspection. The deputy headteacher and middle leaders make more frequent checks on teaching and are developing their skills in providing feedback to teachers. These key leaders are informed and show promise.
- Leaders' improvement plans focus on the right things. However, leaders do not rigorously check the impact of their actions on improving the quality of teaching or pupils' progress. As a result, there has been a decline in pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics in key stage 2 over the last two years.
- Leaders have not suitably evaluated the impact of their use of pupil premium funding on the attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils. As a result, disadvantaged pupils make less progress than other pupils nationally. The recently appointed leader for the pupil premium recognises the need to plan support for disadvantaged pupils carefully and to monitor the difference this support makes.
- Over time, leaders have not done enough to evaluate the impact of support provided for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. They have not tracked the progress of individual pupils regularly enough or evaluated how well additional funding is used. Recently, leadership in this area has strengthened. Appropriate support is now in place to meet individual pupils' needs and pupils' progress is checked more frequently. This has had a positive impact on the progress of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- On a positive note, leaders have introduced a new approach to mathematics teaching in response to the fall in standards in 2016. This approach has been effective in improving teaching and raising standards in some year groups. However, until recently, leaders were slow to recognise and respond to where it has been less effective. As a result, in 2017 pupils' progress in mathematics in key stage 2 fell further.
- Leaders make effective use of the primary physical education and sport funding to develop teachers' skills. However, pupils' participation in the limited number of sporting activities on offer is low. Leaders recognise this and have plans to increase the range of extra-curricular opportunities this term.
- The school receives support from the local authority. This has improved some aspects of leaders' work and has supported leaders in improving the quality of teaching in

some year groups.

- The curriculum provides pupils with a range of interesting learning opportunities. Staff develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education well. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of people of different faiths and cultures ensures that they are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Leadership of teaching and learning in key stage 1 is effective. As a result, the quality of teaching is good and pupils achieve well.

Governance of the school

- Governors ask appropriate questions about the school's performance. However, they have not had sufficient information to accurately understand how well the school is doing. Governors have not compared the progress made by pupils at the school against the progress made by pupils nationally. As a result, the governing body has an overgenerous view of pupils' outcomes in key stage 2.
- The lack of clear success criteria in leaders' improvement plans means that governors have not been able to judge if actions taken have been successful.
- Governors visit the school regularly and undertake some monitoring activities. However, they have not challenged leaders well enough to improve the quality of teaching and accelerate pupils' progress, particularly in reading and mathematics in key stage 2.
- Governors have started to receive more accurate information and are now aware of the low progress pupils are making in key stage 2.
- Governors are very committed and want the best for pupils in the school. They are keen to fulfil their responsibilities and under the leadership of a new chair of the governing body, they are currently undertaking a review of their work. This review is ensuring that governors ask for the information they need to be able to hold leaders to account more effectively for pupils' progress.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Staff receive appropriate training in safeguarding and understand their responsibilities in keeping children safe. They have recently taken part in training to protect pupils from radicalisation and extremism in accordance with the government's 'Prevent' duty. Many staff have undertaken paediatric first-aid training.
- Policies and procedures are clear and followed consistently. Leaders work effectively with external agencies to ensure that pupils and their families receive the support they need.
- Leaders promote a culture of vigilance through posters displayed around the school which remind staff of the process to follow should they have concerns about a child's safety or welfare.
- Leaders and governors carry out thorough checks on all adults who apply to work at the school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- The quality of teaching and learning is variable across the school. As a result, pupils do not make adequate progress over time, particularly in key stage 2.
- Leaders have only recently begun to track pupils' progress from their starting points. This means that teachers have not been focusing on the areas they need to because the previous assessment system did not show this.
- Current assessment arrangements have improved but information is still unreliable because not all teachers have the skills to assess pupils' learning correctly. As a result, leaders cannot be sure about the accuracy of attainment and progress information.
- The local authority has supported teachers to develop their skills in making judgements about pupils' progress. Teachers also meet with colleagues from local schools to check their judgements. As a result, leaders and teachers are now more aware of current pupils' performance. However, teachers do not use the information they have to match learning to pupils' needs, particularly in mathematics. Work in books indicates that too much learning is the same for all pupils. This means that pupils do not make the progress they are capable of.
- Teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve. They do not use questioning effectively to deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding. The most able pupils do not have enough opportunities to work at greater depth in English and mathematics. The least able pupils are over-reliant on adult support and do not develop their independence. As a result, lower-attaining pupils and the most able do not make the progress they should.
- The teaching of mathematics in key stage 2 is not good enough. Teachers do not consistently check on pupils' learning in lessons. As a result, teachers do not identify pupils' errors and misunderstandings quickly enough. This means that many pupils continue to make errors in their work, which slows their rates of progress.
- Teaching in some classes and subjects is effective. As a result, pupils make appropriate progress in their learning. This is particularly evident in key stage 1 and upper key stage 2. However, in lower key stage 2 teaching has not yet been successful in accelerating pupils' progress so that they can catch up. As a result, pupils at the end of Year 6 continue to underachieve.
- The teaching of phonics is good. Adults accurately model sounds and develop pupils' ability to say and write the sounds well. As a result, pupils use their phonics skills effectively to read unfamiliar words and to spell accurately. The proportion of pupils who pass the Year 1 phonics screening check has improved over the last three years and is now above the national average.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Staff have worked hard to develop pupils' resilience and self-confidence successfully. As a result, pupils keep going with their work even when they find it challenging.
- Most pupils say they feel safe at school and that there is an adult they can talk to if they feel worried. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, for example when using the internet.
- All pupils spoken to during the inspection said there was no bullying at the school. Helpful posters are on display in corridors to remind pupils about what to do if bullying does occur.
- Pupils appreciate the many opportunities to hold positions of responsibility in school, for example, as house captains, library monitors, school council representatives, sports captains and e-safety monitors.
- Displays around the school show pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, for example, in learning about different faiths in the school's regular 'faith weeks' and taking part in a 'British values' day. As a result, pupils are respectful and tolerant of one another. They have a clear understanding of moral values, for example the importance of telling the truth.
- Pupils are safe and well cared for in the before- and after-school clubs. Clear routines are in place and pupils behave well.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The school is a calm and orderly environment. Pupils move around the school quietly and sensibly. They behave well on the playground and in the dining hall.
- During lessons, pupils show positive attitudes to their learning and listen carefully to adults and to each other. They follow instructions and settle to tasks quickly. Pupils take pride in their books and present their work neatly.
- Pupils are polite and well mannered. They show respect for others and are confident to express their opinions.
- Leaders have taken action to improve pupils' attendance by working with parents and external agencies. They have recently begun to track attendance information more rigorously. However, there is still work to do to ensure that some groups of pupils attend school regularly, particularly disadvantaged pupils.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- Outcomes are inadequate because pupils do not make enough progress from their starting points in key stage 2, particularly in reading and mathematics. For two years,

pupils' progress has been too low in reading and mathematics. In 2017, pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics was in the bottom 10% of schools nationally.

- The school's own assessment information and work in books indicates that the progress of current key stage 2 pupils remains too slow to enable them to catch up quickly in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Disadvantaged pupils in key stage 2 make consistently less progress than other pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. The progress of these pupils is too slow because leaders do not use pupil premium funding well enough to provide support which meets their needs.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities have made variable progress in reading, writing and mathematics. This is because, over time, teaching has not met the needs of all pupils. Until recently, leaders have not done enough to evaluate the effectiveness of the support this group of pupils receive. This year, however, support for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities has improved. As a result, this group of pupils are starting to make better progress.
- The most able pupils, mainly in key stage 2, do not make the progress they are capable of. This is because work is not challenging enough.
- In the past, leaders have not taken into account pupils' starting points to accelerate progress and raise attainment. Leaders have introduced better systems for tracking pupils' attainment and progress this year. However, leaders acknowledge that teachers need to develop their skills in making accurate assessments of pupils' learning.
- In contrast to key stage 2, pupils' outcomes in key stage 1 rose in 2017 and were above national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. Work in books shows that current pupils in key stage 1 are making good progress in writing and mathematics.
- The proportion of pupils who reach the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check has improved over the last three years and is now above the national average. This represents good progress from pupils' starting points.

Early years provision

Good

- Effective leadership in this part of the school has secured improvements. Teaching is becoming more consistent and effective and outcomes for children have improved.
- Children enter early years with knowledge and skills below those typical for their age. In the last three years, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development has increased.
- The new early years leader has an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the early years, including what information about children's learning shows. She has begun to raise adults' expectations of what children can achieve and has put actions in place to improve the quality and consistency of teaching, learning and assessment.

- Adults model spoken language well. As a result, from low starting points, children make good progress in their language development. The teaching of phonics is effective and adults help children to say and write sounds carefully.
- Adults plan a range of interesting activities. As a result, children enjoy learning and concentrate well. Adults give careful thought to planning activities that capture boys' interests and accelerate their progress. For example, during the inspection the theme of pirates enthused boys to learn about the sound 'sh'.
- Leaders have established effective partnerships with parents. There are opportunities for parents to come into school to celebrate their children's achievements and to work alongside their children in the classroom. Parents also receive information leaflets to help them to support their children's learning at home.
- Children behave well and play happily together. Staff keep children safe. Most relationships between adults and children are positive. However, some staff do not consistently manage children's behaviour in a positive way.
- Assessment systems, while improving, do not provide a fully informed view of the progress current children are making. For example, the rapid progress identified in some assessments in Nursery does not reflect the slower progress seen in children's learning journals.

School details

Unique reference number	104242
Local authority	Walsall
Inspection number	10042898

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 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	213
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Elizabeth Sleigh
Headteacher	Ann Taylor
Telephone number	01543 452921
Website	www.stbernadette.walsall.sch.uk
Email address	ataylor@stbernadette.walsall.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	15–16 October 2013

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is above the national average. The number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs, or an education, health and care plan is also above the national average.
- There is one class in each year group from Reception to Year 6. There is a morning and an afternoon Nursery class.
- The school runs a before- and after-school club.
- The school does not meet the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in 15 parts of lessons. Some of these observations were undertaken jointly with the headteacher. One inspector visited the before-school club.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at breaktimes and lunchtimes. They spoke formally with a group of pupils as well as talking to pupils in lessons and around school.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and talked to them about their reading.
- Inspectors extensively examined the quality of work in pupils' English and mathematics books.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, assistant headteacher, other leaders and members of staff. The lead inspector met with one governor, the vice-chair of the governing body and the chair of the governing body. A meeting was also held with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans, information about pupils' progress, records relating to safeguarding and attendance, minutes of meetings of the governing body, feedback from the local authority and the school's website.
- Inspectors took into consideration the 26 parental responses to Parent View. Inspectors also spoke to parents at the beginning of the school day.
- Inspectors spoke to staff and took account of views expressed in the six responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire.

Inspection team

Claire Jones, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Andrew Orgill

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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