

St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School

Tewkesbury Lane, Monkston Park, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire MK10 9PH

Inspection dates

17–18 October 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	Outstanding

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection, standards have dipped. New leaders' actions have led to some improvements in outcomes and teaching, but not consistently across the school.
- Leaders' and governors' understanding of the effectiveness of some key aspects of the school is not accurate. Their evaluations of teaching and its impact on progress are too generous.
- Some subject and middle leaders are new in post and are not yet making a positive contribution to improving the school. Subject improvement priorities are not sufficiently focused on enhancing pupils' learning.
- Leaders do not have a comprehensive enough picture of the progress that different groups of pupils make.
- Most-able pupils do not always make the strong progress of which they are capable. Pupils who have fallen behind, including the disadvantaged, are not catching up.
- The quality of teaching varies too much. Practice in assessment is not well developed, including questioning. Sometimes, teachers' expectations are too low.
- Pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding are insufficiently developed in the wider curriculum.
- When teaching is less effective, pupils lose concentration, and some disrupt others.
- The impact of governance is variable. While some aspects have helped the school improve, others focus too much on operational issues.

The school has the following strengths

- Personal development and well-being are exceptional. Opportunities for pupils to lead and to cultivate their interests are superb.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very successfully promoted. Pupils take remarkable pride in their community and want to make a valuable contribution to it.
- Safeguarding is highly effective. The designated leader follows up concerns diligently. Leaders' and governors' checks are thorough.
- Early years is well led, and most children make strong progress. Effective support enables them to meet the demands of Year 1.
- Attainment in key stages 1 and 2 national assessments rose in 2018, as did the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the phonics screening check.
- The school has developed its partnership with parents and provided guidance, so that they can better support their children's learning.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen the impact of leadership and management on improving the school by:
 - making sure that leaders and governors have an accurate understanding of how well pupils are achieving and how strong teaching is
 - sharpening the approach to tracking, so that it provides a more comprehensive and accurate picture of pupils' progress
 - developing governance, so that it is more strategic and so that governors hold leaders to account for the progress that different groups make
 - ensuring that leaders' and governors' improvement plans are focused more sharply on improving learning
 - developing subject leaders, so that they make a stronger contribution to enhancing pupils' learning, including through more effective monitoring and evaluation
 - ensuring that the wider curriculum enables pupils to acquire and apply subject-related knowledge and skills.
- Strengthen practice in teaching and assessment, so that it is more consistently effective by:
 - raising levels of challenge and teachers' expectations, so that pupils are more stimulated and focus more in class
 - making sure that teachers set tasks that build on what pupils already know and can do
 - developing the way teachers use questioning, so that it checks the breadth and depth of pupils' learning more effectively
 - ensuring that teachers set tasks that enable pupils to gain the subject-specific knowledge and skills intended by the teacher.
- Improve pupils' progress, so that:
 - disadvantaged pupils, and pupils who need to catch up, make the progress they need
 - most-able pupils make the rapid progress of which they are capable.

A review of governance and use of the pupil premium funding is recommended to assist the school in developing these aspects of leadership and management.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The new headteacher and deputy headteacher have been in post for just over a year. They have introduced some new approaches, which are starting to have a positive impact. Despite these improvements, the school is not yet good because progress is not strong enough, practice in teaching, learning and assessment is not consistently strong, and the curriculum in some subjects is underdeveloped.
- Senior leaders' evaluations of the quality of teaching and assessment do not always take enough account of the impact that teaching has on pupils' learning and progress. As a result, their evaluations are sometimes too generous.
- Leaders do not keep close enough tabs on pupils' progress. They are not clear about the variations in progress rates between different groups of pupils, what causes them, and how disparities might best be eradicated. In addition, leaders' actions do not always focus sharply enough on ensuring that pupils learn well in subjects in the wider curriculum, or on strengthening pupils' progress in English and mathematics.
- Subject leaders' contributions to moving the school forward are variable. While a number have led to improved outcomes, for instance those made by the phonics leader, others have not. In some cases, this is because priorities in subject leaders' improvement plans have not yet been actioned. However, some subject improvement plans are not sufficiently focused on enhancing the depth and breadth of pupils' subject-related knowledge, skills and understanding.
- The wider curriculum is not well developed in some subjects. Monitoring by subject leaders is not thorough enough. It does not always identify shortfalls, either in coverage, or where teachers set tasks that do not enable pupils to acquire subject-specific knowledge and skills.
- Leaders effectively monitor and carefully evaluate the impact that additional funding for disadvantaged pupils has on pupils' well-being. However, their evaluations of the impact that funding has on targeted pupils' academic achievements are not thorough enough. As a result, in general, disadvantaged pupils are not making the rapid progress they need to in order to catch up.
- The leadership of pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is effective. This is because the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) has developed a bespoke approach to tracking the small steps in progress that pupils make.
- Staff are well supported in all aspects of their work. Middle leaders and subject leaders are provided with access to external training, as well as training provided through the local Catholic partnership. Staff well-being has been a focus for the school, and the headteacher is very supportive and approachable.
- Pupils are very well cared for at the school. They have rich and varied opportunities to make positive contributions to their school and the wider community. Leaders are very aware of the barriers that some children face and have ensured that pupils can access the support they need to overcome these barriers, for example by providing pupils with

assistance in managing their emotions.

- Pupils' spiritual, moral, cultural and social development is very well promoted throughout the school. Of note is the way it both develops pupils' sense of community and their leadership skills. Pupils are nurtured and encouraged to reflect deeply on their actions.

Governance of the school

- The governing body is in the process of establishing itself following the appointment of several new governors. While some aspects of governance, such as checks on safeguarding, have assisted the school in strengthening its practice, some checks made by governors have focused too much on the day-to-day running of the school. In addition, improvement plans that governors oversee do not focus enough on improving learning. Therefore, governors' monitoring and evaluation of the way plans have been implemented have not always focused enough on the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes.
- Governors are highly supportive of the school and have rightly praised the pastoral care the school provides. Their ability to hold school leaders to account is hampered by weaknesses in the way the school tracks pupils' progress, especially the progress of key groups, such as those eligible for additional pupil premium funding.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are particularly impressive. The headteacher is the designated leader. She has profound understanding of the safeguarding concerns that are most relevant to the school and its community. She does not shy away from raising difficult issues with parents and carers, or with the local authority's welfare officers, when she has concerns about pupils' safety and well-being.
- The designated leader is highly vigilant. Safeguarding arrangements and processes are tightly managed. The spot-checks that governors make on safeguarding are effective because they are carefully targeted and stringent.
- The school provides enormous support and care for pupils and their families, including through its recent work on promoting good mental health and well-being. A good example of this is the way that the designated leader makes home visits to check on absent pupils when there is no reply from the two contact numbers that have been provided for the school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching varies too much to be good. Although it is strong in some classes, it is weaker in others. Generally, teachers' assessment practice is not as well developed as other aspects of their work.
- The tasks teachers set for pupils in a range of subjects do not always enable pupils to deepen their knowledge and understanding. Sometimes, this is because tasks do not build on what pupils know and can do already.

- Some resources that the school uses to develop pupils' abilities in reading are not effective. In such cases, resources are not pitched at a high enough level and the questions asked about the texts are not far reaching or probing enough.
- There is a whole-school focus on writing. In some classes it is working better than in others. This is because the writing tasks teachers sometimes set for pupils require them to add grammatical structures that are not appropriate for the style and form of their writing. As a result, the grammatical features pupils use do not always assist readers in enjoying or making sense of the writing.
- In mathematics, there has been a successful focus on developing fluency. Some pupils who have mastered working accurately and speedily are not given opportunities to apply their mathematical knowledge and skills. On occasion, the tasks teachers set, which are intended to require the application of mathematical knowledge, do not do so. For example, pupils in one class were asked to complete a poster describing a calculation method, which did not enable pupils to apply mathematical reasoning or to problem solve.
- Teachers do not always check well enough that the concepts they teach have been learned. In some cases, this means that they are not aware when pupils are ready to move on or when they have gaps in their learning.
- In some classes, pupils lose interest because they are not given enough challenge or because they are not always provided with enough to do.
- Teaching in the wider curriculum varies too much. It is effective in some areas, especially in some key stage 1 classes. However, overall, it does not enable pupils to acquire the depth and breadth of knowledge they need to gain expertise. Work in pupils' books shows that in some subjects, topics are covered in scant detail. The worksheets pupils are given do not enable them to consolidate their learning or make connections between different topics, especially in science.
- Teaching in early years and in phonics is well focused. Teachers and assistants ensure that pupils and children can apply their phonic knowledge accurately.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Of note is the care and nurture that the school provides for individuals, the numerous leadership roles available for pupils, and opportunities for pupils to develop their interests through the raft of after-school clubs offered.
- Leadership is promoted extremely well. Many pupils in the school have leadership roles, which enable them to develop new skills and competencies. Pupils also have the opportunity to lead on projects that involve work with local communities, as well as those further afield, such as supporting a school in Ghana. As a result, pupils have a very highly developed understanding of the different issues and concerns that most affect these communities.
- The school's strong values permeate through all aspects of its work and are promoted equally by staff and pupils. Leaders have ensured that the school environment is

exceptionally welcoming for all. For example, there is a world map showing the different countries from which pupils originate. Leaders have established an environment that also supports pupils who require sensory stimulation.

- Pupils access a diverse range of clubs and additional experiences through 'St Bernadette's University', which is the name given to the selection of after-school activities offered.
- Parents who spoke to inspectors praised highly the care pupils are given as well as the varied opportunities the school provides for pupils to develop new skills and expand their horizons. The school's partnerships with parents has evolved, and more parents now support their youngsters, including helping them with their reading.
- Pupils feel very proud of many aspects of their school. Pupils told inspectors that they feel involved in making the school as good as it can be, and they could cite the contributions they had made to this goal.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. It is not outstanding because despite the strong focus placed on positive relationships, in some classes, a number of pupils do not follow instructions, and they disrupt the learning of others. This is mainly because teaching is not engaging, and some pupils do not have enough to do. Some pupils commented to inspectors about the effects of low-level disruption.
- Attendance in the last academic year was above average, and rates of persistent absence were lower by comparison with the previous academic year.
- The school is generally harmonious, and most pupils treat each other with respect and goodwill. On the rare occasions when there is bullying, pupils say that teachers deal with it well.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- The standards reached by pupils in class and work in pupils' books indicate that pupils' progress is inconsistent, especially in writing. Some most-able pupils do not make the rapid progress of which they are capable. Disadvantaged pupils and White British pupils make slower progress than their peers in a number of year groups. Actions to improve the progress made by these groups are not always effective.
- Early performance information from 2018 shows that pupils' progress overall in key stage 2 is broadly average in mathematics and reading, with disadvantaged pupils' progress being slightly above average.
- Across the school, current pupils' progress in writing is not yet consistently strong. It varies too much between year groups and between different groups of pupils. As a rule, disadvantaged pupils do not make strong enough progress in writing. According to early performance data for 2018, overall progress in writing declined compared with the previous year. Although disadvantaged pupils' progress in writing was better than it was in 2017, it was not strong enough and remained below average.
- Work in books shows that the tasks most-able pupils are set and the books they read

are not sufficiently challenging for them to make the rapid progress of which they are capable. Early performance information for 2018 shows that although attainment was high for this group, their progress was not strong enough, especially in mathematics and reading.

- Some groups of pupils in key stage 1 do not make the rapid progress they need to in order to catch up, especially disadvantaged pupils. As a result, their attainment in key stage 1 assessments is generally not as strong as that of others nationally.
- There has been an improvement in the overall proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the national tests and assessments at key stages 1 and 2 and in the phonics screening check. Approaches to teaching early reading are working well. Strong teaching in early years is also helping children make good progress from their starting points.
- The school's approach to tracking the achievement of different groups is not effective and does not enable leaders to build up a detailed picture of how well different groups are doing. However, the SENCo has developed new approaches for tracking the progress of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. Assessment information indicates that the support provided for targeted pupils enables them to make strong progress from their starting points.

Early years provision

Good

- Early years provides children with fruitful learning experiences and a firm grounding in the knowledge and skills that they need to make a good start in Year 1. The setting is located at the heart of the school and its highly positive atmosphere contributes to the overall ambience of the school.
- The early years setting is better than other aspects of the school, but is not yet outstanding. This because leaders do not have a comprehensive enough picture of current children's progress, especially which groups are making the least progress, and the areas of learning in which children are developing more slowly. For example, the leaders do not track to see whether children attending Nursery classes make stronger progress than others. The proportion of children reaching a good level of development is below national averages, despite the strong progress children make.
- Children in the setting are well looked after and thoughtfully nurtured. Many start with levels of development that are lower than is typical for their age and most make strong progress. New approaches have led to improvements in children's confidence in numeracy and literacy.
- Across the setting, adults' expectations of children are high. They successfully reinforce routines and make sure children develop strong listening skills. Adults work well with children and encourage them to speculate, try out new ideas and keep going, even when they find what they are doing challenging.
- Well-planned activities enable children to gain new knowledge and skills as well as develop their vocabularies, for example through sharing 'news' with their classmates. Teachers and assistants use different types of questions well. Some enable children to gain a deeper understanding of narrative and the way it works, and others stimulate children to think and acquire new vocabulary, which assists them in grasping new

concepts.

- Strong modelling and guidance from teachers and assistants mean that children cooperate well with each other. The atmosphere is calm and purposeful. Children are safe. Adults are aware of the needs of individuals and how best to meet them.
- The teaching of phonics is particularly effective in early years. Teachers use a variety of carefully considered approaches to ensure that, by the end of the session, children gain the phonic knowledge intended. The school has provided effective additional support and guidance to parents, so that they can assist their children better in learning to read.

School details

Unique reference number	134318
Local authority	Milton Keynes
Inspection number	10054018

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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	446
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Mary McGowan
Headteacher	Mrs Jane Zamora
Telephone number	01908 692438
Website	www.stbernadettesschool.com
Email address	office@stbernadettesschool.com
Date of previous inspection	26–27 June 2014

Information about this school

- St Bernadette’s Catholic Primary School is larger than the average-sized primary school, and designated as Catholic in its religious character. It had its last section 48 inspection in 2014 and has an interim monitoring visit scheduled for November 2018.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well above average, as is the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- Since the previous inspection, there has been a new headteacher and deputy headteacher, and a new chair of the governing body. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have been in post for just over one academic year.
- A higher proportion of pupils than average arrive at, or depart from, the school at different times during the school year.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities supported by the school is below average. The proportion who have an education, health and care plan is above

average.

- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is below average.
- The early years comprises of a Nursery, where children attend part time or full time, and two Reception classes.
- The school does not make use of any off-site provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors made visits to observe learning in approximately 26 lessons. On most occasions, but not all, they were accompanied by senior leaders. Samples of pupils' work were scrutinised by inspectors on two separate occasions. On the second occasion, inspectors reviewed work from the previous academic year. Inspectors also reviewed a sample of learning journals from children in Reception. On two separate occasions, inspectors met groups of pupils, and on the second occasion pupils in the group read to the inspector. Pupil leaders gave an inspector a guided tour of the school.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher, together and separately. Inspectors also held a meeting with subject leaders and separately with middle leaders, including the SENCo. Meetings were held on two separate occasions with leaders responsible for assessment and tracking.
- Inspectors also met separately with leaders responsible for early years, safeguarding, physical education and sport premium funding, and behaviour and attendance. They also met with the learning mentor. Inspectors met informally with parents at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors met with a group of staff. They met with the chair of the governing body and two other governors on two separate occasions. A meeting was held with a representative from the local authority whom the school has commissioned for support.
- Documentation and policies, which included the school's own evaluation, development plans, pupil progress information and responses to the school's own parent questionnaires, were reviewed. Inspectors scrutinised the school's safeguarding records (including safety checks made when teachers are appointed), pupils' records and a selection of teachers' files.

Inspection team

Sarah Hubbard, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Tracey Bowen	Ofsted Inspector
Stephanie Scutter	Ofsted Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

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.

You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2018