

INSPECTION REPORT

**ST BERNADETTE'S ROMAN CATHOLIC
AIDED PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Wallsend

LEA area: North Tyneside

Unique reference number: 108624

Headteacher: Mr A Egdell

Reporting inspector: Mr L Garner
25507

Dates of inspection: 27th – 29th November 2000

Inspection number: 224094
Inspection carried out under Section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Rising Sun Cottages Wallsend Tyne and Wear
Postcode:	NE28 9JW
Telephone number:	0191 200 7363
Fax number:	0191 200 7364
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Father G M Lee
Date of previous inspection:	7 th December 1994

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Bernadette's is a larger than average voluntary aided Roman Catholic primary school with 304 boys and girls on roll between the ages of three and eleven. The national average for primary schools is 243 pupils. The school serves a community closely based around St Bernadette's Church. This community identity has a positive impact on the education the school provides. Children's attainment on entry to the school is similar to that seen in most children of their age. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals (ten per cent) is broadly in line with the national average. The school population is entirely of a white ethnic origin and there are no pupils who speak English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs (18 per cent) is broadly in line with the national average. Two per cent of pupils have statements of special educational needs; this is above the national average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an outstanding school. The inspirational leadership of the headteacher is backed by a hard-working and talented group of teachers. Lessons capture pupils' interest and enthusiasm and this helps them to achieve high standards. The core values of Christianity pervade the work of the school and have made a major contribution to the excellent relationships that exist between pupils, teachers, parents and the wider community. The school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards of achievement in English, mathematics and science are well above those seen in most schools.
- The quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is very good.
- The leadership of the headteacher is outstanding, and he is very well supported by his deputy and the very effective governing body.
- Pupils' personal development is promoted very well and this encourages their excellent attitude to their work and their very good behaviour.
- The school has established excellent relationships with parents and the wider community. These make a positive contribution to pupils' learning and their sense of belonging to the school and the parish.

What could be improved

- Pupils' knowledge of the cultural diversity of the British society in which they will live.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good progress in the years since the last inspection in November 1994. All the key issues for action identified in the last report have been successfully addressed. High standards of attainment have been maintained. The quality of teaching has improved. The provision for the education of the youngest children in the nursery is much better than it was, and is now a strength of the school. The dedication of the staff and their strong commitment to sustaining high standards, along with the clear leadership of the headteacher, senior staff and governors, mean that the school is very well placed to improve further.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by eleven-year-olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	Compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	C	A	B	B
Mathematics	C	A	B	B
Science	A	A	A	A

Key

well above average above A
 average B
 average C
 below average D
 well below average E

Results for pupils aged eleven in the national tests in 2000 show that standards in English and mathematics were above the national average, and standards in science were well above the national average. These results were slightly below those achieved in 1999 when standards were well above average in all three subjects. This is explained by the differences between the year groups; more pupils in the year 2000 group found learning difficult. Inspection findings suggest that the results for 1999 are more typical of levels of attainment.

For pupils aged seven, the school's performance in 2000 was extremely impressive. In reading, writing and mathematics, attainment was well above the national average, and in reading and mathematics it was in the top five per cent of schools in the country.

Standards in the other subjects are generally high because the school has maintained a good cover of a wide curriculum. Artwork on display is of a particularly high quality, and work in information and communication technology is also very good because all teachers have had training in this.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Excellent. Pupils enjoy coming to school. They listen carefully to their teachers in lessons and willingly offer answers or join in discussions. Their enthusiasm for learning makes a big contribution to the high standards they achieve.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils are usually polite and show consideration for others. They behave well in class, and when walking around school or in the playground.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent. Pupils get on well with each other when working or playing. They are given many opportunities to take responsibility and accept these gladly. The excellent relationships between them and all staff in school make an important contribution to the progress they make. They know their views will be listened to and respected.
Attendance	Good. Attendance is above the national average. Pupils arrive in school punctually and lessons begin on time.

Pupils value what the school does for them and know that their contributions will be valued. This mutual respect means that pupils benefit well from the lessons they receive and usually make very good progress.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged up to 5 years	Aged 5-7 years	Aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Very good	Very good	Very good

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

The quality of teaching is very good overall. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed during the inspection. In nearly 90 per cent of lessons teaching was judged to be good or better, with 60 per cent of lessons being very good or excellent. Very good teaching was seen in most classes. Outstanding teaching was seen in the nursery, the Year 6 class and for the pupils with special educational needs.

Both literacy and numeracy are very well taught, good attention being given to developing fluent reading and very good mental arithmetic skills.

Throughout the school, teachers have positive relationships with their pupils and high expectations for their achievement and behaviour. They plan lively and interesting activities that capture pupils' interest and enable them to make very good progress in their learning. Teachers encourage pupils to think for themselves and, because of the mutual respect, pupils are confident to tackle challenging tasks. Teachers use effective questioning which encourages pupils to think carefully about the work they are doing and improves their speaking and listening skills. In some lessons, teachers use games very well to make learning fun for pupils. These encourage all to take part with enthusiasm. The very good range of high quality resources available in all classrooms makes a positive contribution to pupils' learning.

Teaching is of equally high quality for all groups of pupils. Those who have special educational needs are given very good support, both in withdrawal groups and in the classroom. Higher attaining pupils are given sufficiently challenging tasks and are expected to work at a high level.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. The curriculum, which meets all statutory requirements, is of a high quality. The school has spent much time and effort in producing documents which not only include all the requirements of the National Curriculum but are also very useful to class teachers when they plan their lessons.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good provision is made for these pupils. The co-ordinator for special educational needs provides the highest quality teaching for the groups she takes, and has produced a highly stimulating environment in which to teach them. These factors contribute greatly to pupils' social as well as academic development. The work they do in the classroom is pitched at the right level for them, and support staff and volunteer parent helpers provide valuable assistance.

Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision is very good overall. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is closely linked to the overarching religious background and ethos of the school; it is excellent. The provision for the moral and social development is also at this high level. Staff have very high expectations of how pupils will behave and provide very effective role models. Pupils are given real responsibilities and respond very well to this challenge. Provision for pupils' cultural development is good overall. Pupils have a good understanding of their local culture largely because of the good range of visits. Provision for pupils' understanding of the multicultural nature of British society, although satisfactory, is less well developed.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school offers a very good level of care for its pupils. Very good procedures ensure pupils' welfare and their health and safety. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are excellent.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides inspirational leadership to the school. He is very well supported by his experienced deputy. They give a clear direction to the work of the school and promote a culture of continuous improvement.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors fulfil all their statutory responsibilities. They have a very good insight into the life of the school. Many governors involve themselves in the work of the school. The enthusiasm and expertise of the chair of governors contribute strongly to the school's very good ethos and standards.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school makes very good use of a wide range of information gathered about pupils' standards. This means that accurate, achievable targets can be set for individual pupils and year groups.
The strategic use of resources	The school uses its very good resources effectively. Spending is closely linked to educational priorities. Effective financial management systems are in place and the school applies the principles of best value.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children enjoy coming to school, they behave well and make good progress. • The school expects children to work hard. • All staff are approachable, and the school is very welcoming. • Teaching is of a high quality. • Children are helped to develop mature attitudes to their work and daily life. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A few parents felt that there should be more after-school activities.

The inspection team entirely endorses the parents very high regard for the school. It considers that the extra-curricular activities provided are as good as those provided by the majority of primary schools.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Standards of achievement in English, mathematics and science are well above those seen in most schools.

1. The range and quality of pupils' work in English is very impressive. Teachers plan their work so that literacy is brought into other subjects as well as English lessons. In a lesson which addressed the problems Year 6 pupils may meet in their life outside school they showed very well-developed skills in speaking and listening. They spoke confidently about the pressures that occur when other children ask them to do things they don't want to do. They listened carefully to the views of others and have learned how to develop the discussions to suggest solutions to problems. For example, they explained clearly how they might avoid conflict by making an excuse rather than just saying 'no' when asked to smoke cigarettes or steal from shops. In a literacy lesson, the Year 6 pupils studied the ancient story of Beowulf. They made sensible suggestions about who would be chosen to 'kill the dragon'. They are also developing an understanding of the English language; they identify simple and complex sentences and can change a complex sentence into a number of simple sentences. Year 4 pupils identify verbs in sentences and suggest other words that might be used instead of, for example, 'rage' or 'plunge'. Year 2 pupils know that an author writes a book, that the pictures in it are drawn by an illustrator and that a publisher makes the book available in the shops. They recognise speech marks and question marks and use them to help them read with expression.
2. Teachers have used the National Numeracy Strategy well to improve pupils' skills in areas of mathematics such as mental arithmetic. Year 6 pupils confidently count on and back in 10's, 25's and even 0.01's! They are solving problems that need a very good understanding of the properties of numbers, such as square or prime numbers, and are designing their own mathematical problems. Year 3 pupils have recognised that multiplication and division sums are connected. They suggest that if 40 divided by 5 is 8, then 8 multiplied by 5 is 40. Young pupils in Year 1 are already identifying 'doubles' such as $5+5=10$.
3. Year 5 pupils are looking at growth and nutrition in their science lessons. They know that they need to eat a balanced diet and identify foods that are proteins or carbohydrates. They remember that it often takes a full day for food to digest in their bodies! Pupils from Year 4 have been investigating sound vibrations. They have found that different lengths of elastic make different sounds when 'plucked' and that the longer pieces make the deepest sounds. Year 3 pupils know that sugar is not good for teeth and recognise that it is better to brush their teeth after, rather than before, breakfast. Year 1 pupils link their science work with their design and technology, and investigate 'sound' when making musical instruments which can be stuck, plucked or scraped.

The quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is very good.

4. The quality of teaching seen during the inspection was very good. Excellent teaching was seen in the nursery, in the Year 6 class and in sessions for groups of pupils with special educational needs taken by the special educational needs co-ordinator. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. There were a number of significant strengths in the teaching seen. Foremost among these is the excellent relationship between teachers and pupils. This means that pupils are confident that their contributions to lessons will be valued, and willingly offer answers to questions and join in discussions. The enthusiasm

of the teachers captures pupils' attention and interest. In most lessons the working atmosphere is purposeful and pupils make good gains in their learning.

5. Teachers usually identify clearly what they expect pupils to learn in lessons. They make sure that pupils know what is expected. This means that pupils understand the purpose of their activities and gives them an idea of how they are doing. Very good questioning helps pupils to think hard about the work they are doing and focus on the important areas. For example, pupils in Year 1 were asked to explain the reasons for the way they had made their musical instruments. They were encouraged to suggest ways in which their work could be improved. Teachers are good at building on the work pupils have done previously. Most lessons begin with a discussion of what was done last time. This sometimes refers to work done in other subject areas. Year 1 pupils were reminded of the work they had done in geography when they discussed what the pirate ship they were to draw would look like. Teachers manage the pupils in their classes well. They generally have very good strategies to ensure that pupils listen carefully and benefit from the well planned lessons.
6. Teachers are confident in the strategies needed for the recently introduced National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. These sessions are well planned, well presented and interesting. There is a very good range of resources available in these subjects. This means that pupils use new, attractive books and other materials that interest them and encourages their effective learning.
7. The very thorough assessment procedures in place mean that teachers can group pupils accurately and provide work that is at the correct level for their needs. Teachers offer a very good level of support to pupils with special educational needs, and appropriate praise and encouragement helps these pupils to make very good progress.

The leadership of the headteacher is outstanding, and he is very well supported by his deputy and the very effective governing body.

8. The school is given very clear direction by the leadership of the headteacher. He leads by example and his enthusiasm for the school transmits itself to other members of staff. He sets high standards and links priorities for development closely to the aims of the school. The local education authority uses the headteacher to advise and support other schools. He therefore spends a considerable amount of time out of school. However, this does not harm standards, partly because of the very good management systems that are in place, but mainly because of the good quality leadership provided by the experienced deputy headteacher when the headteacher is out. The three key stage leaders play an important role in co-ordinating new initiatives such as the National Numeracy Strategy, and the changes for the youngest children to prepare them for the Foundation Stage.
9. The school development plan is an effective working document that gives clear guidance to staff. All staff are involved in the discussions which take place before the plan is written. Wide consultation is a feature of the management of the school. Parents have many formal and informal opportunities to express their views and they consider that these are valued. Pupils also have opportunities to make their opinions known through their well-organised school council. For example, their request for more seating in the playground led to extra benches being provided.
10. The governing body has established itself as a positive force for development in the school. They saw the school successfully through a period where the school budget was only just adequate. Now, as the reputation of the school in the community has risen, more pupils have brought in additional funds, and the financial situation has improved.

Governors are very supportive of the school, are proud of the standards achieved but still discuss all issues thoroughly. Many governors also help in school. This help ranges from supporting groups of pupils in the classroom, to playing the piano in assembly or chairing the pupil council. All involved in the leadership and management of the school constantly seek to explore areas of school life that might be improved.

Pupils' personal development is promoted very well and this has encouraged their excellent attitudes to their work and their very good behaviour.

11. The school's excellent ethos, anchored firmly in a caring Christian community, means that the personal development of pupils is central to its work. It regards the high standards achieved to be closely linked to pupils' attitudes. Every opportunity is taken to encourage pupils to take responsibility for some aspects of their school life. This begins with the three-year-olds in the nursery. Even though they have only been in school a few weeks, they are putting on their own painting overalls, unclipping their paintings when finished and selecting their place to work in. Children are given opportunities to perform for their friends, for example singing a nursery rhyme. Year 1 pupils choose the size of the paper they will use to draw a pirate ship. They appreciate that their choice will have an effect on the size of their drawing. Pupils in all classes negotiate class rules, thereby experiencing an 'ownership' of them.
12. Older pupils are given many opportunities to plan their own work and also to consider the needs of younger children. They help in the nursery and reception classes and have more formal responsibilities, such as reminding pupils in assemblies of how they should behave. All classes timetable sessions in which pupils have opportunities to discuss issues that affect them. The pupils in Year 6 discussed in a very mature way the problems that can arise out of school. They know that other children will put pressure on them to smoke or steal or act in a dangerous way. They recognise that just saying 'no' might make the matter worse. They talk alternatives through sensibly and write scripts to illustrate how the problem might be solved.
13. The excellent relationships between adults and pupils in school encourages this open discussion. Pupils know their views will be valued and therefore become more confident in expressing them.

The school has established excellent relationships with parents and the wider community. These make a positive contribution to pupils' learning and their sense of belonging to the school and the parish.

14. The school, particularly the headteacher and chair of governors, has worked hard to involve parents in all aspects of school life. It provides very good written information to parents, starting with excellent booklets given to parents of nursery children. Parents are welcomed into school at all times. Many take advantage of this to ask about their child's progress and offer help in lessons. The nursery, in particular, benefits from two or three parents working with children most of the week.
15. Parents are informed fully about the work their children are expected to do at home and receive helpful advice sheets that tell them how to work effectively with their children. A 'two-way' home-school booklet gives opportunities for parents and teachers to comment on children's progress.
16. There are close links between the school and the wider community of the parish. Mass is held in school each week; the parish priest is regularly in school giving good support

and encouragement. Other links involve other members of the community who have no direct links with pupils. For example, older members of the parish came into school to help pupils produce tapestries showing local historical and geographical features.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

- The way the school develops pupils' appreciation of other cultures and religions. While provision is satisfactory, it isn't provided to the same high standard as that for spiritual, moral and social development.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- Ensure that all teachers fully implement the school's very good multicultural policy to take all opportunities to prepare pupils for life in a multicultural society.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	32
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	17

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
17	44	27	12	0	0	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	20	259
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	28

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	38

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	5
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	4

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	96.27
National comparative data	94.4

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.19
National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	19	21	40

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	19	19	19
	Girls	20	20	20
	Total	39	39	39
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	98 (94)	98 (94)	98 (98)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	19	19	19
	Girls	20	20	20
	Total	39	39	39
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	98 (94)	98 (94)	98 (94)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	20	11	31

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	18	19	19
	Girls	8	7	9
	Total	26	26	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	84 (93)	84 (100)	90 (100)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	18	16	19
	Girls	8	6	9
	Total	26	22	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	84 (93)	76 (90)	90 (100)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	80 (75)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	279
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	11
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.7
Average class size	29

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	112

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32

Number of pupils per FTE adult	10
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	447,891
Total expenditure	423,793
Expenditure per pupil	1,582
Balance brought forward from previous year	7,847
Balance carried forward to next year	31,945

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	283
Number of questionnaires returned	202

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	75	22	1	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	71	27	1	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	70	28	1	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	59	36	3	0	1
The teaching is good.	85	15	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	64	31	4	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	79	19	1	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	84	16	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	69	28	2	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	80	18	0	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	76	23	0	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	38	34	15	2	11