

# INSPECTION REPORT

**ST BASIL'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Widnes

LEA area: Halton

Unique reference number: 111390

Headteacher: Mr J Kennedy

Reporting inspector: Mr D Carrington  
15414

Dates of inspection: 25<sup>th</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> November 2002

Inspection number: 247114

Short inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Foundation
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Hough Green Road Widnes
	Postcode: WA8 4SZ
Telephone number:	0151 424 7839
Fax number:	0151 420 8973
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr M Findlater
Date of previous inspection:	15 <sup>th</sup> September 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		
15414	Mr David Carrington	Registered inspector
9479	Mrs Chris Field	Lay inspector
22474	Mrs Jan Taylor	Team inspector

The inspection contractor was:

Trio Inspections

Cherry Trees  
Wenlock Road  
Tasley  
Bridgnorth  
Shropshire  
WV16 4QB

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London WC2B 6SE



## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St Basil's Catholic Primary School is located about three miles to the west of Widnes town centre. There are 371 pupils on roll, making the school larger than average. Most of the pupils live within two miles of the school. About a quarter of the pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is average. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language, which is much lower than in most primary schools. An average proportion of pupils has special educational needs though the proportion with statements is below average. When children start school they have average levels of knowledge and skills. The school has earned two government awards for improvements to standards and is a *Beacon School* for its work to improve the learning of higher attaining pupils.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

St Basil's Catholic Primary school is a highly effective place of learning. The pupils are given a good education and develop as mature, sensible and well-behaved children who enjoy excellent relationships with adults and other pupils. Standards have improved well over the last five years and are now above average overall, with a particular strength in English. There are some aspects of the school's work where further improvement can be made, especially in the involvement of senior managers in consistent procedures to check the strengths and shortcomings of school performance. However, the sense of commitment, drive and determination amongst staff is apparent and the headteacher leads and manages the school with conspicuous success. The school gives good value for money because of the good standards, progress and educational provision in place. Its *Beacon* status is assured.

#### **What the school does well**

- Teaching is good, as are the quality and range of learning experiences.
- Standards are above average overall, particularly writing, and pupils make good progress in their work.
- The pupils are one of the school's great strengths. They enjoy school, behave very well, enjoy excellent relationships and work very hard.
- The headteacher has built a highly effective school and has invested in good quality people who have ensured the school moves forward at a good rate.

#### **What could be improved**

- The role and responsibilities of senior managers is not defined clearly enough and systems for checking the work of the school are not sufficiently focused on learning.

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

In 1997, there were six key issues for the school to tackle. These related to systems to monitor classroom practice, the staff development programme, the provision of learning support for pupils with special educational needs, raising standards in music, the development of the design and technology curriculum and the provision of outdoor facilities for the under fives. Since that time the school has advanced well on these issues, though school managers are determined to bring even more improvement to monitoring procedures and learning opportunities for the under fives.

### **STANDARDS**

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	A	A	A	A*
Mathematics	B	A	B	A
Science	B	A	C	A

Key	
very high	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E
very low	E*

*Similar schools are those schools with between 20% and 35% of the pupils entitled to free school meals.*

Standards have been improving year on year for the past five years and the school has received the recently introduced national award for improvement to standards for two years running. In 2002 pupils in Year 2 achieved standards in the SATs that were well above the national average in reading and mathematics and in the top five per cent of schools nationally in writing. The Year 6 pupils achieved standards that were well above the national average in English, above average in mathematics and average in science. These results were very high in English and well above average in mathematics and science when compared to schools with a similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals. The proportion of pupils reaching higher levels in the SATs were above average in English and average in mathematics and science in Year 6 last year. Over the last three years, boys have done better than the girls in the SATs in Years 2 and 6, which is opposite the overall national trend in both years.

Inspectors judge that the standards being achieved this year match those of last year's SATs. It is evident in lessons and in pupils' past work that expectations are high, pupils work productively and progress is good from the day that they start school. Standards in English are one of the school's strengths as the development of writing is very good across the entire curriculum and standards are well above average. Standards in mathematics are not always quite as good as those in English, but the numeracy strategy is successful and standards this year are above average. There are also good standards in science, information and communication technology (ICT) and history. Standards in design and technology and music have improved and are now broadly average.

### **PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES**

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils are keen to come to school, they enjoy their work and are enthusiastic learners.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is very good throughout the school day and this contributes to the very good learning environment. There have been no exclusions in recent years.
Personal development and relationships	The quality of relationships is excellent and pupils show increasing initiative and personal responsibility as they grow older.

Attendance	The attendance rate is similar to the national average, although proportionally more pupils have unauthorised absence than in most primary schools.
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## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	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 school has made good improvement to the quality of teaching since the 1997 inspection and its quality is good overall. There is no evidence of unsatisfactory teaching, whether in lessons or as shown by the work completed previously by the pupils. On the contrary, the teaching quality in over three-quarters of the lessons seen was good or very good, which is better than usually found. The quality of teaching is of the same good standard in the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT. Expectations, the teaching of basic skills, the management of pupils and the use of homework are all strengths, though planning, especially to show the work designed for higher attaining pupils, is an aspect for continuing development. The quality of learning is good because of the effective work of the support staff. Pupils work very hard and produce much work of good, and often very good, quality. Pupils show considerable interest in their work, they concentrate very hard and develop a mature, sensible and independent approach that enables them to make consistently good progress.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The learning experiences provided are of good quality overall, though the school has firm plans to enhance provision for children in reception, particularly for their physical development. The range of activities outside lessons is unsatisfactory, which is of concern to parents.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good work is done to help pupils with special educational needs. This ensures that the pupils make the same good progress as the others in school. Support staff play a particularly valuable role in the support of these pupils.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The very small proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language are well supported, they make good progress and their skills with English improve well.
Provision for pupils’ personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school is particularly successful in its work to foster the moral and social development of pupils. It also provides well for their spiritual and cultural development, though work to improve pupils’ awareness of the richness and value of other cultures, faiths and ethnicity could be enhanced.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school has appropriate procedures to ensure the health, welfare and safety of all pupils. The monitoring and promotion of attendance is not sufficiently rigorous or consistent. Systems of assessment are good and the data produced is increasingly used to set targets for pupils and track their progress towards these.
The partnership with parents	Parents have very positive views of the school and are involved successfully in their children’s learning. The quality of information provided about progress is satisfactory.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher has built a high performing team that is driving the school forward. There is very good shared commitment to improvement and the school's mission is met in full. The senior management team is at an early stage of development and does not have clearly established roles and responsibilities in terms of raising standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are interested and well involved in the work of the school and are proud of its successes. They do not use all of available information to check that the school is performing as well as it might.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Procedures to check that teaching, and particularly learning, are the best possible are not consistent. However, key managers have good insights into strengths and shortcomings in the school's work and action to bring improvement is successful. The school's priorities are appropriate, though strategies to achieve these and time deadlines are not identified clearly enough in the improvement plan.
The strategic use of resources	The quality of financial planning and management is good and all resources are used well in educating the pupils. Additional grants, for example for pupils with special educational needs and for raising standards are used well. The outdoor accommodation is bleak in places and resources and accommodation to assist the physical development of children in reception classes is basic. There are good levels of staffing and the adults in school are one of its main strengths.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like school.</li> <li>• Teaching quality is good and this enables pupils to make good progress.</li> <li>• The expectations of work and behaviour are good and pupils become mature, sensible and responsible learners.</li> <li>• Parents are well involved in the work of the school and find it easy to talk to people when they have concerns.</li> <li>• The management of the school is good.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The range and quality of activities outside lessons is restricted.</li> </ul>

The inspection team agrees completely with the above views of the parents.

## PART B: COMMENTARY

### WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

<b>Teaching is good, as are the quality and range of learning experiences.</b>
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1. It is evident from lessons and the examination of pupils' past work, that they get a good deal in school. Much of the good quality of the school's work is due to the calibre of teaching. Over three-quarters of the lessons observed showed teaching to be good or very good and in the remainder, teaching quality was satisfactory. There was no unsatisfactory teaching during the inspection and pupils' books show no trace of teaching that is anything less than satisfactory. All this bears evidence of the good improvement made to teaching since the 1997 inspection, when teaching was judged to good, though a tenth was unsatisfactory. At that time, the proportion of very good or better lessons was not that significant. Today, the proportion of very good teaching is more than the usual level found in primary schools.
2. There are few aspects of teaching that stand out as in need of much enhancement, though the identification in planning of the things to be learned by particular groups of pupils could be more consistent and precise. This is especially the case for higher attaining pupils in mathematics and science. In fact, the expectations held of these pupils are good, it is just that they are not consistently well recorded in planning. Similarly, work to develop the physical skills of the youngest children in school is not planned as thoroughly as their literacy and numeracy tasks. These are matters that are straightforward to correct and key managers and staff are committed to making the necessary changes.
3. Some aspects of teaching stand out as being decisive in the school's trend to improved standards and quality of education. Chief amongst these is the very good level of expectation of work and conduct amongst staff. This results in lessons that are focused on the development and extension of knowledge, skills and understanding and ensures that pupils' behaviour, attitudes and effort are very good.
4. The basic skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) are taught very effectively. Teachers are adept at identifying opportunities to develop such skills across the curriculum. So, for example, high quality writing is produced in science and history and ICT is used to hone knowledge and skills in English, mathematics and geography. The displays of work about the school show some lively, imaginative writing in many formats and inspectors observed a number of lessons where very good quality writing emerged because teachers developed skills so effectively. In a Year 6 English lesson to write persuasively, the teacher had identified well the differing needs of different groups within the class. The higher attainers were given opportunities to discuss the issues surrounding threats to local woodland from misuse and over-development and then to write to identify the issues and persuade the local council to take the issue seriously. Lower attainers were provided with a lead-in to their work by giving them a series of questions to answer and an outline sketch of the first paragraph. Both groups took advantage of their experiences and by the end of the lesson produced writing that was neatly presented and fulfilled the criterion of being persuasive in argument.
5. The management of pupils is very good and this contributes strongly to the calm and purposeful working atmosphere in school. All the available time for learning is put to good use and the pace of lessons is brisk. This holds the attention of the pupils and lessens the need to insist on appropriate behaviour and effort. In fact, rarely did teachers have to chastise pupils or insist on improved behaviour during the inspection. The pupils expect to work in an orderly setting in school and have sufficient time to *run off steam* in the playground. The few pupils with

emotional and behavioural needs are well supported and they take their place in lessons with positive attitudes and good effort in the main.

6. Homework is used most successfully to consolidate and extend knowledge, skills and understanding. It is linked closely to the theme of the lesson, set regularly, collected conscientiously and marked thoroughly. The provision of homework can be tracked thoroughly in pupils' past work and it is evident that the school has got its homework provision right. Few parents have concerns about the amount of homework and the majority takes a good role in helping their children complete the reading, writing, numeracy and other work that they bring home.
7. In return for the good quality of teaching, pupils work very hard and produce good amounts of well presented work. The depth of concentration is notable, even amongst the youngest children in reception. Pupils are interested and enthusiastic about their work and they complete it with evident enjoyment. In a Year 3 art and design lesson the pupils were very keen to share their experiences and work with the teacher and their *visitor*. During the lesson they worked industriously and creatively to produce pictures that showed a range of human feelings. Different groups used different materials and techniques, but all were well focused on the work and their skills and knowledge advanced well during the session. The pupils talked sensibly and sensitively about the feelings conveyed in the collection of pictures by well known artists and about their own work. They had clear ideas about what they had wanted to convey – one group said “...we have shown a lady with a pram saying goodbye to a soldier on a train who was leaving for the Second World War because we thought this showed sadness better than the lady and soldier kissing goodbye in the photograph.”
8. Such good quality learning is rooted in the effective curriculum in place. All subjects have a firm place in the curriculum and it is evident that design and technology and music have been improved considerably since the previous inspection. The school's curriculum emphasis is firmly on English and mathematics, though the very good cross-curricular links in place ensure that these two subjects do not over dominate the work. Thus, an appropriate time is spent on English and mathematics lessons and skills and knowledge in these two subjects are promoted well during lessons in such subjects as science, ICT, geography and history. The school's strategies for literacy and numeracy are, therefore, very effective, not being limited to just the sessions identified on the timetable for English and mathematics.
9. In general, other aspects of the curriculum are also secure. So, for example, the school works successfully with the local community and other schools to enhance the learning opportunities for its pupils. The school hosts mathematics challenge workshops for higher attaining pupils from local schools and this is of great benefit for the higher attainers at St Basil's. Parents are pleased with the opportunities that the school provides to help their children do well, though they express concerns over the level of extra curricular activities. Inspectors agree that such opportunities are more limited than in most other primary schools. Nonetheless, pupils learn what they should, at a good rate and in interesting and challenging lessons. Learning is a hands-on affair and there is a richness about it that ensures pupils do their best at all times and achieve good standards.

**Standards are above average overall, particularly writing, and pupils make good progress in their work.**

10. Evidence from the SATs over recent years shows that standards in school are rising steadily. The 1997 inspection charted a school where standards were average when children started in reception and above average in English, mathematics, science and geography at the end of Year

2. In other subject standards were average, though they only just met this mark in art by the age of seven. By the end of Year 6, attainment was above average in English, mathematics, science, geography and history but it was below average in music and there were some relative weaknesses in design and technology. In the other subjects, Year 6 standards were average and satisfactory progress was recorded for pupils across the school with good progress flagged in the three core subjects of English, mathematics and science. In addition, pupils with special educational needs made very good progress in the development of language skills.
11. The school has sustained the strengths identified in 1997 and has made important improvements to standards. Chief amongst these has been the lifting of standards in English from above average at the age of eleven to well above average. The attainment of children when they start school in aspects of communication, language and literacy is broadly average but because literacy, especially writing, is taught so effectively, progress is brisk and standards rise as pupils move from class to class. In 2002 Year 2 pupils achieved standards in the SATs that were well above the national average in reading and very high in writing, being amongst the top five per cent of schools nationally. Year 6 pupils achieved standards that were well above the national average in English. When compared to similar schools, the English results were very high in Year 6. Such standards are also shown in pupils' books, where the work is well and neatly presented, correctly spelled and punctuated and grammatically correct. Many pupils speak with a pronounced local accent and often use idiosyncratic grammatical construction but this is not transferred to lessons and the written work is in standard English, as is spoken communication. Most teachers insist that the conventions of spoken English are observed consistently.
  12. Standards in mathematics have also improved. Taken together with the improvements in English, this has resulted in the school achieving the recently introduced national award for raising standards for two consecutive years. There is systematic development of numeracy skills and knowledge from the first days children spend in school and much work is taxing and completed against the clock. Year 1 pupils, for example, were observed to enjoy the challenge of counting forward and back to 20, 50 and then 100 in fives and tens. About a third of the class counted confidently in hundreds to a thousand and then back, and were able to say that "*... there are ten hundreds in a thousand.*" This level of knowledge and skill is well above that usually found in the autumn term in Year 1. Again, the results of the 2002 SATs points up the good standards in mathematics. Year 2 pupils achieved well above the national average mathematics and Year 6 pupils reached above average standards. In comparison with similar schools these results were well above average.
  13. The school also has a good track record of standards in science, though they dipped a little in the SATs last year. Most of the science is practical and investigational and pupils have good opportunities to select the materials and methods, to make predictions and compare them against the outcome and, a particular strength, to write at length in their own words about what they did, noticed and evaluated. This process starts early on, for example, Year 2 pupils, in their lesson to learn that batteries store electricity, were able to talk about the correct orientation of batteries in the motor powered toys they had brought to school. They knew that watches have smaller batteries than, say, a cassette player and began to classify the toys in terms of batteries powering lights, motion or sounds. Their intuitive knowledge that batteries have to be charged to be of any use was developed well by the teacher, who led them on to links with earlier work on electrical circuits at the end of the session. In last year's SATs, Year 6 pupils achieved standards that were above the national average and well above the similar schools average in science.
  14. The quality of provision and level of resourcing in ICT have both been improved by the school and these have impacted well on standards, which are above average at the ages of seven and eleven. Because pupils can work in two well-equipped ICT suites it is possible for staff to

ensure that they have ample practice in building basic and more advanced ICT skills. The calibre of support from non-teaching staff is very good and allows pupils to be taught in smaller groups than otherwise would be possible. Often, the teacher takes two thirds of the class in one suite, whilst the support assistant works with the other third in the second suite. This, the amount of individual tuition can also be increased and the work targeted more closely at the needs of specific pupils. The work is well planned and links with other subjects are strong. In Year 5, for example, pupils were working on Roman gods and goddesses during the inspection. They use ICT to research this history topic and showed good skills in navigating the encyclopaedia CD ROM. The pupils used the keywords in their notes and prompt sheets to find complementary information and within five minutes they all had at least one screen of facts to combine into an account to present to the other pupils. The support assistant interacted well with the pupils during this lesson and made a major contribution to the good progress made in the lesson.

15. The school has raised attainment levels in design and technology since the 1997 inspection. The scrutiny of pupils' past work shows that coverage of all strands of the subject, including planning and evaluation is secure and that the standards achieved are average at the end of Year 2 and 6 and progress is sound. Similarly, in music, standards have been lifted and progress accelerated by the introduction of a programme of work throughout the school that is systematic in building skills and knowledge. There is evidence of some good quality music performance and work to broaden pupils' composition, listening and appreciation skills is moving apace. Some good progress is made in music, as in Year 6 where pupils commented in detail on the structure of the music heard in a lesson observed by inspectors, then compared it with a second piece. In all, standards are above average across the school and in all subjects, including art and design, geography, history and physical education. This is due to the calibre of the curriculum and teaching and learning quality in each of these subjects.
16. The expectations held of pupils are very good, though they are not always recorded precisely enough in planning. However, the higher attaining pupils are generally challenged well and they make the same good progress as other pupils. This is particularly the case in English and the proportion of Year 6 pupils reaching higher levels in the SATs were above average in English last year. They were average in mathematics and science and school managers are increasingly checking to ensure that higher attainers are as successful in all subjects. Pupils with special educational needs are well provided for. Where withdrawal from lessons takes place, it is managed carefully and the pupils receive a net benefit from working outside the mainstream lesson. The support staff play an important and effective role in the education of pupils with special educational needs and this contributes much to the good progress that they make.
17. There have been some differences in the achievement of boys and girls in recent years. Generally, boys have done better than the girls in the SATs in Years 2 and 6, which is opposite the overall national trend in both cases. Inspectors observed no significant difference in the motivation and effort of girls and boys in lessons and the scrutiny of past work did not produce any evidence of different progress by boys and girls either. As part of its work to set and track specific targets for pupils, the school is monitoring the performance of boys and girls closely.
18. The conditions for productive learning are well in place and progress and standards are good overall. However, the school is not just about academic performance and it sets great store in the personal development of the pupils.

**The pupils are one of the school's great strengths. They enjoy school, behave very well, enjoy excellent relationships and work very hard.**

19. The 1997 inspection report judged that most pupils behaved well, they showed positive attitudes and were interested in their work. Their concentration levels were high, and most had good

listening skills. Relationships were good and pupils were valued as individuals. All this has been maintained and improved and today these aspects of pupils' personal development are all *very good* rather than *good*. The pupils are one of the significant strengths of the school.

20. The visitor to school is immediately impressed by the warm welcome given by the pupils and their courtesy and very good behaviour. The pupils take great interest in visitors and very willingly share their own experiences in school and what they have learned. The pupils talk confidently and amiably with others, whether pupils or adults. Pupils support each other effectively and show care and consideration with equal measures of sensitivity and encouragement. The school and its pupils fully live its *caring, sharing* mission and the Catholic ethos is well upheld by pupils' very positive approach to their schoolwork. Relationships mirror this, being excellent at all levels.
21. Whilst pupils are very keen to come to school, a fact endorsed by their parents, the rate of unauthorised absence is above the national average and some pupils are repeatedly late for school. In the main, these are dealt with soundly, though much is left to the individual teacher in dealing with the issues. School managers appreciate the need to bring more consistency to the monitoring of attendance and punctuality and to build on the good work already in place to set targets for the few pupils most involved and reward improvement. Most pupils, however, are enthusiastic learners who clearly enjoy their time in school and who work very hard. Few need to be told to keep their heads down as they work and many lessons have a buzz of active learning throughout the session.
22. Pupils' spiritual development is well fostered, not just in assembly. There are planned opportunities for spiritual awakening in lessons, as in the Year 3 art and design lesson discussed above when pupils thought deeply about how works of art conveyed human feelings in different ways. In general, the cultural development of pupils is also good and the work in English, art and design, history and music especially, makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural appreciation. The school is aware of the need to amplify its work to encourage the understanding, tolerance and celebration of the culture, beliefs and ethnicity of all groups within the wider community.
23. There are particular strengths in the promotion of pupils' social and moral education. The *playground buddy* scheme and the *Andrew Barlow Award*, in memory of a former pupil, are two initiatives that are most successful in recognising the value of the pupils themselves in the enhancement of the pupils' social and moral values. Overall, these two elements of the school's work are very well executed and all pupils benefit significantly. School managers, staff, governors and parents alike said, in their own ways, that the pupils as people were at the heart of the school. They were not wrong in airing this sentiment.

<p><b>The headteacher has built a highly effective school and has invested in good quality people who have ensured the school moves forward at a good rate.</b></p>
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24. The school's past record for effective leadership and management, as set down in the 1997 inspection report has been upheld well. At that time, there was good teamwork between the headteacher, staff and governors and the regular visits to school by governors were seen as effective. The very positive ethos of the school was noted, together with the fact that the school successfully met its mission and aims. High expectations of the pupils were seen to be at the core of leadership and management and resulted in good quality education and high standards. It was said that everyone worked productively. All this is still in place.
25. The headteacher has clear priorities for school improvement and the determination to succeed. He leads the school effectively and has built a strong staff team that is united in its quest for

advancement. Individual members of staff have many strengths and demonstrate this in their thorough and committed approach to their duties. All staff work very hard in the interests of the pupils and there is a good sense of unity in school. As a team, the staff are a high performing group and subject coordinators are play a key role in driving the school forward.

26. The governors are still deeply committed to the school and they are proud of its achievements. They ensure that statutory requirements are met and publish all the necessary information for parents. Many governors visit the school during session time and they are well informed by the headteacher of events, accomplishments and shortcomings. They do not, as yet, use all the available information to enable them to check that the school is performing as well as it can on all fronts. However, the principles of best value, to ensure that the school is making the necessary comparisons and is competitive in all that it does, are applied soundly.
27. The school uses its funding carefully to ensure at least good quality educational provision. Money is prudently managed and learning resources are put to good use. There are some aspects of the accommodation that are ripe for improvement; some parts of the site are bleak and the outdoor accommodation for children in the reception classes is not ideal. School managers recognise these issues and have plans to bring the quality of the site up to that of the rest of the school. There are good levels of staffing, and as this report has already made very clear, all staff are very successful in their work to help pupils make good progress.
28. The many strengths of the school are the fruit of the effective leadership and management, as is the good value that it brings parents and taxpayers in terms of what is added to pupils' starting levels, whether academic or personal. The school has a bright future, especially because it is very ready for the task of enhancing leadership and management by establishing a clear remit for senior managers and developing rigorous and consistent procedures to monitor and evaluate its own work.

## WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

**The role and responsibilities of senior managers is not defined clearly enough and systems for checking the work of the school are not sufficiently focused on learning.**

29. Whilst leadership and management is well directed and cohesive, there is one tier that is fairly new and still finding its way in terms of its involvement in strategic management. Senior managers, like their counterparts in the headteacher, deputy headteacher and subject leaders, are committed to the school and its future and work hard to bring improvement. However, they have yet to have a clearly worded remit that recognises their responsibility and potential for the raising of standards. Members of the senior management team have individual appreciation of the strengths and shortcomings of the school, rather than a collegiate understanding of what works, what is worth sharing across the school and what requires improvement. There is no reason why this level of understanding will not evolve over time, but it is in the school's interests, particularly the pupils that the role, responsibilities and influence of the senior management team are recorded and pursued formally.
30. One aspect of the remit of senior managers extends into the realm of monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance. At present some members of staff have better awareness of this than others. This is because some have had formal opportunities to observe the quality of the curriculum, educational provision and standards in other classes whilst others rely on other ways to determine how well their subject is faring. Monitoring and evaluation, therefore, are not always consistent, regular or rigorous enough and are more often focused on what has been done, rather than what and how things are learned.



31. The headteacher has good understanding of the school's work and translates this into appropriate priorities for improvement. The school improvement plan gives insufficient emphasis to the strategies, success criteria and time frame for successful outcome. Once the priorities are published, other staff take up the reins of improvement with vigour and good impact. Leadership and management systems to ensure everything in school is of the best require enhancement rather than overhaul, and such enhancement is recognised by all concerned as right and proper to meet fully the needs of all pupils.

#### **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

32. St Basil's Catholic Primary school is a place where the pupils get a good deal. Standards are on an upward track and the quality of education is good with some very good features. There is clear focus on improvement amongst the staff and governors and the will and determination to take the next steps to hone the school's work is without doubt. It is therefore evident that the school has good prospects for the future and should tackle the one key issue with confidence and success.

**1. Define clearly the leadership role of senior managers and involve them, together with other staff, in developing consistent systems to monitor the quality of learning for all pupils.**

By:

- Firming up the strategies, success criteria and time frame for priorities in the school improvement plan.
- Identifying the role and responsibilities of the senior management team.
- Ensuring that monitoring systems involve staff fully and are consistent through the school.
- Focusing monitoring and evaluation processes on the quality of learning.
- Checking unauthorised absence and its impact on progress.
- Making sure there is provision of appropriate experiences for all six areas of learning in reception classes.
- Identifying ways and taking action to make sure that the outdoor space complements the good quality learning environment of the school.
- Checking that the planning of work for higher attainers, especially in mathematics and science, is precise enough.
- Continuing to development the school-wide target setting and tracking process.
- Ensuring that, through the curriculum, pupils develop an appropriate awareness of the richness and value of other cultures, faiths and ethnicity.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

43

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

10

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	9	25	9	0	0	0
Percentage	0	21	58	21	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than two percentage points.

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

YR – Y6

Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)

371

Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals

91

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

#### Special educational needs

YR – Y6

Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs

1

Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register

53

#### English as an additional language

No of pupils

Number of pupils with English as an additional language

1

#### 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

1

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.0
National comparative data	5.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.7
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 (Year 2)*

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	30	11	41

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	27	30	29
	Girls	11	11	11
	Total	38	41	40
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	93 (93)	100 (96)	98 (100)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	28	28	28
	Girls	11	11	11
	Total	39	39	39
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	95 (93)	95 (98)	95 (98)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

*Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)*

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	28	34	62

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	25	24	27
	Girls	33	32	33
	Total	58	56	60
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	94 (93)	90 (93)	97 (100)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	24	20	28
	Girls	30	28	34
	Total	54	48	62
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	87 (80)	77 (88)	100 (93)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

**Ethnic background of pupils****Exclusions in the last school year**

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	0	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

**Teachers and classes****Financial information****Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	15
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25
Average class size	26.8

Financial year	2001-2
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**Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	7.0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	209

	£
Total income	785 306
Total expenditure	746 569
Expenditure per pupil	1 991
Balance brought forward from previous year	18 225
Balance carried forward to next year	56 962

FTE means full-time equivalent

**Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0

Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

**Results of the survey of parents and carers**

**Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	370
Number of questionnaires returned	166

**Responses (percentage of answers in each category):**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school	73	25	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school	81	18	1	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good	70	30	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home	58	33	6	1	2
The teaching is good	84	16	0	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on	76	23	1	0	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem	81	18	1	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best	89	11	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents	73	25	1	0	1
The school is well led and managed	86	13	0	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible	73	25	0	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons	26	25	20	12	17