



St Bernadette's RC Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 102229
LEA Harrow LEA
Inspection number 276679
Inspection dates 8 March 2006 to 9 March 2006
Reporting inspector Jane Wotherspoon

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary	School address	St Bernadette's RC Primary School Clifton Road Kenton, Harrow HA3 9NS
School category	Voluntary aided	Telephone number	02082048902
Age range of pupils	4 to 11	Fax number	02089050738
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Chair of governors	Mrs A Doherty
Number on roll	399	Headteacher	Mrs C Caulfield
Appropriate authority	The governing body		
Date of previous inspection	16 October 2000		

Age group 4 to 11	Inspection dates 8 March 2006 - 9 March 2006	Inspection number 276679
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors. An inspection of religious education and the content of collective worship, under section 48 of the Education Act 2005, was carried out at the same time by an inspector from the Diocese of Westminster. The report from this inspection is published separately.

Description of the school

St. Bernadette's is larger than most primary schools. Its pupils come from a wide area that is both socially and ethnically diverse. Almost half are White British with a wide mix of minority ethnic groups making up the other half. Nearly a quarter speak English as an additional language. Around a fifth have free schools meals and a similar proportion have learning difficulties; both figures are slightly higher than average. The proportion who leave and join the school at different times is higher than average. Around one in ten pupils are from families seeking asylum. A small number come from travelling families and a few are looked after children. The proportion of four-year-olds who start school with skills and knowledge lower than expected for their age has been rising in recent years. During the inspection, the headteacher was absent through illness and most Year 6 pupils were on a residential visit. The school has experienced recruitment difficulties, resulting in high staff turnover and some temporary appointments. Several staff are new to teaching.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school judges its effectiveness as good, but inspectors judge it to be satisfactory with good elements. It provides satisfactory value for money. The school is successful in meeting its mission statement to develop understanding, respect, tolerance and love. Provision for pupils' personal development is strong and underpinned by the good ethos of care and support. Pupils are valued as individuals and racial harmony is strong. Pupils enjoy the interesting and stimulating activities provided. The vast majority of parents are positive in their support for the school's work. Pupils make a good start to their education in the reception classes, where the provision is good. Pupils achieve well and teaching is good. Elsewhere, teaching is satisfactory and pupils make steady progress. Pupils with learning difficulties and those at the early stages of learning English are supported well and make good progress. More able pupils make satisfactory progress but there is scope for providing them with more challenging work. Systems for assessing pupils' work are not followed consistently. There is scope to make better use of performance data to set more challenging targets. Regular systems for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning have identified some important areas for improvement but these have not always been followed through rigorously. Progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory despite the significant changes in staff. The new senior leadership team has identified the correct priorities for improvement and has the capacity to bring about the necessary changes.

What the school should do to improve further

* Improve teachers' use of assessment information to plan work that better matches pupils' abilities, especially those pupils capable of reaching higher standards* Ensure that the monitoring of teaching is clearly focused on how well pupils are learning and that issues are followed through rigorously* Analyse performance data more effectively to identify which pupils could be making better progress and to set challenging targets.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils in the reception classes are making good progress and about a half is likely to meet expectations for their age by the end of the year. Their attitudes to school are positive and they are enjoying learning. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve satisfactorily and standards are broadly average. The downward trend in the test results of previous years was halted in 2005. Pupils at the early stages of learning English make good progress and achieve as well as other pupils once they have begun to master the language. Test results for eleven-year-olds were close to average in 2005 though pupils exceeded the targets set for them. Boys achieved better than girls in this year group. The targets set for 2006 are modest given the pupils' prior attainment, and likely to be exceeded. Results are expected to rise. The work of Year 6 pupils shows that the more able are being challenged appropriately in English and mathematics, but this is not the case throughout the school. The school's own data indicate that more able

pupils could achieve higher standards. This is confirmed from lesson observations during the inspection. Many pupils join the school during Years 3 to 6. Some come directly from abroad, speak little English and some have had minimal schooling. Generally, these pupils make good progress in the time that they are in the school. Pupils with learning difficulties have well-targeted support from teaching assistants in lessons and in small groups; they make good progress as a result.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' attitudes to learning and behaviour are good because of the positive relationships between adults and pupils, and between pupils of all ages. Attendance is close to the national average and pupils enjoy coming to school. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The strong Christian ethos permeates school life. Pupils have a strong sense of right and wrong and very good understanding of the needs of others. They work together very well, respecting each other's views and with a high degree of racial harmony. Pupils are confident that bullying and racism are very rare occurrences but that they have someone to confide in should they have a problem. They know well how to keep themselves safe. Responsibilities are taken seriously. The school council brings improvements to the life of the school, including the creation of a "Buddy Bench" where lonely or unhappy pupils are supported. As a pupil remarked, "Our friends pick us up when we are down." Pupils' understanding of the need of a healthy diet is outstanding. This is embedded through the school and pupils have opted to bring books instead of sweets for birthday treats. Pupils are extremely enthusiastic about physical activities and have very good understanding of the health benefits. They are actively involved in events in the community and diocese. They join other schools and the community for worship and sport. Theme weeks equip pupils well for their future lives, supported by their sound literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is satisfactory with some good features. With few exceptions, classes are managed effectively. Relationships are consistently good. Teachers make good use of interactive white boards when introducing lessons to engage pupils' interest. Support assistants are well-deployed and give effective support to pupils with learning difficulties. The pace of lessons is generally satisfactory but could be quicker on occasions. The teaching in the reception classes is good. Here, teachers create a stimulating environment for learning and are successful at linking a variety of activities to a common theme. Lesson planning has clear learning objectives. Teachers know what they want pupils to learn and tell them. In the better planning, tasks are adapted for pupils of different abilities. This is mainly successful for pupils with learning

difficulties but not always challenging enough for more able pupils. Planning for mathematics, for example, is constrained by the over-reliance on a commercial scheme of work. There is scope for teachers to break away from this and adapt the plans to be more meaningful for their own pupils. The exception is Year 6 where clear use of Numeracy Strategy materials provides a stronger base for activities and leads to better progress for pupils. Teachers use a variety of systems for assessing and recording pupils' achievement. These are currently being rationalised to provide a simpler but coherent method to be adopted consistently. There is scope to improve the way that this information is used to adapt tasks to pupils' abilities. Some good systems, such as those in the reception classes, could be used in other classes. All teachers mark pupils' work regularly. Some marking, especially in Year 6, is very effective in telling pupils exactly what they need to do to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good curriculum is firmly rooted in Christian values. Provision for personal, social and health education and citizenship is very good. The needs of pupils with learning difficulties and those pupils at the early stages of learning English are met well. Travellers' children have additional support to compensate for aspects of the curriculum they have missed. However, there is scope for more challenging activities for the most able pupils to ensure their needs are met in full. Curricular planning is good and there are increasing links between subjects, making learning relevant and interesting. Older pupils learn French and theme weeks, rooted in aspects of pupils' personal development, generate whole-school interest and excitement in new learning. A very good range of extra curricular clubs and activities, and an extensive programme of visits and visitors, enrich the learning opportunities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Provision for pupils' care, guidance and support is good. All staff have the interests and safety of every pupil at heart. Pupils say that they feel safe and the vast majority of parents say that pupils' welfare is paramount. All pupils, including those most at risk, are well supported and the school works effectively with parents and other agencies to ensure their well being. There is good support and guidance for pupils at the early stages of learning English and for pupils with learning difficulties. Learning targets geared to their specific needs ensure that these pupils progress well in appropriately challenging and achievable steps. Teachers pay good attention to health and safety aspects in lessons such as physical education and science and issues relevant to pupils' health, safety and well-being are explored in assemblies and circle times. Appropriate procedures for child protection are in place.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The school's leaders have successfully created an ethos where pupils' personal development features strongly. Staff and governors take the views of parents and pupils seriously and the vast majority of parents are pleased with all aspects of the school's work. The school has developed a very good partnership with a range of external agencies that support effectively pupils with learning difficulties and those at the early stages of English language acquisition. Families are supported well through initiatives such as the Family Literacy programme. School self evaluation is satisfactory. There is a regular system for monitoring teaching and pupils' work but this lacks sufficient rigour and outcomes are not applied consistently across the school or followed up by subsequent monitoring. This has been hampered to some extent by high staff turnover in the past two years. There is scope for greater use of data analysis to track the progress of individual pupils and to set more challenging targets. The new school leadership team and middle managers have a good understanding of what needs to be improved and know how this might be achieved. They are strongly committed to improvement and up to the challenge. They have introduced some initiatives to raise standards but these have not been in place long enough to have a demonstrable impact. All staff and governors are involved effectively in planning school improvement and governors hold the school accountable for the quality of education it provides. Governors fulfil their statutory duties well and have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have good oversight of the school budget.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Children

As you know, we have just finished inspecting your school and I am writing to tell you what we found. You made us very welcome and we enjoyed talking to you. I would like to thank those of you who came to tell us what you think of the school and a special 'thank you' to those pupils from Year 6 who wrote to us with their views. You are clearly very proud to be pupils of St. Bernadette's. Although we judged the school as satisfactory overall, there are many good things going on.

We were pleased to see all the good things that you do in class and at other times. You obviously enjoy being at St. Bernadette's and you work hard. You behave well. You really do try to show 'understanding, respect, tolerance and love' for each other. It is good to know that you have friends who look after you. You told us that there is hardly any bullying or racism. We were impressed at how much you know about keeping yourselves healthy and about how to stay safe. Well done to the school council for trying to improve the school lunches and for encouraging pupils to eat fewer sweets. It is good to see that you get involved with charity events in school, in the community and in the parish.

The staff work hard to give you lots of opportunities to learn different things during the school day and after school. You take part in some interesting projects, such as the Healthy Schools week and the One World week. The adults in the school look after you well. We have asked the teachers to give some of you harder work because we think you can manage it. We have asked the staff to keep checking on how well you are doing, how quickly you are learning and how you might be able to learn even more.

Jane Wotherspoon

Jane Wotherspoon

HMI