



# St Bernard's Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 103462  
**LEA** Birmingham  
**Inspection number** 276927  
**Inspection dates** 23 February 2006 to 24 February 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Bogusia Matusiak-Varley AI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Wake Green Road
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided		Birmingham
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11		West Midlands B13 9QE
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	0121 4643795
<b>Number on roll</b>	383	<b>Fax number</b>	0121 4646895
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mrs Mary Cullen
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	11 July 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Peter O'Hanlon

<b>Age group</b> 4 to 11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 23 February 2006 - 24 February 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 276927
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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

The school serves the parish of English Martyrs in Sparkhill, Birmingham. Pupils attending the school come from a diverse locality but generally their socio-economic circumstances are average. Several pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, all of whom are fluent English speakers. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is below average and five pupils have a statement of special educational need. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good school with a few outstanding features that offers a good quality of education for its pupils and good value for money. The school's mission statement of 'we work, we play, we care, we play' underpins all aspects of the school's provision. A very strong catholic ethos is reflected in all of the school's undertakings and pupils' personal development is outstanding. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are exemplary because of the outstanding provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and the high levels of care, support and guidance. Partnership with parents and relationships throughout the school are excellent.

Pupils' achievements are generally good in spite of fluctuating standards over time by Year 2 and Year 6. Standards are above average in speaking and listening, reading and mathematics. In writing, standards by Year 2 are average but improving, although the higher attaining pupils are not always challenged sufficiently. In Year 6, standards in writing are above average. Provision and standards in Reception are good. The quality of teaching and learning is good but assessment data is not used rigorously enough to plan future work. Pupils who have learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress and are fully integrated into all aspects of school life.

The good curriculum is enriched by an outstanding range of visits, visitors, extra curricular activities and residential trips. This has a very positive effect on pupils' personal, social and emotional development. However, opportunities to raise standards in writing are not fully reflected in planning.

The school is well led and managed. Governance of the school is good and self-evaluation is generally accurate although the school does not assess itself highly enough in the care that it provides for its pupils. The school has good capacity to improve as shown by the good improvement since the last inspection, especially in cultural development and the greater independence shown by pupils in their work.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Continue to raise standards in writing throughout the school, especially for the younger pupils, and ensure that opportunities for this are identified in curriculum planning.
- Ensure that data from assessment is used rigorously to plan the next steps of pupils' learning.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Achievement and standards are good. Children join Reception with broadly average skills but their attainment in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development is below that found nationally. On entry to Year 1, they exceed the expected standards in all areas other than in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development where they meet the expected standards. They leave the school with above national average standards in English, mathematics, science

and information and communication technology (ICT). Overall, pupils' achievements are good. Through its good systems of self-evaluation, the school recognised that high standards were not always being maintained as the procedures for assessment were not robust enough and the curriculum in the reception class needed restructuring. Good assessment procedures have been put in place and children's rates of progress in the Foundation Stage have improved and are now good. Children enter Year 1 well prepared for dealing with the demands of the National Curriculum.

National assessments at the end of Year 2 show that standards are above average in speaking and listening, and reading, and close to the average in mathematics and writing. The school has made good progress recently in improving standards in mathematics and in writing and the rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning. Pupils make good progress but the higher attaining pupils are not challenged enough in writing. The purchase of new resources has helped boys to achieve as well as girls.

By the end of Year 6, the national test results in 2005 showed that standards were significantly above average in English, mathematics and science. This is confirmed by inspection findings. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress because they receive good levels of support from the teaching assistants. The school exceeded its targets in 2005 and has set itself challenging targets for 2006 which it is well placed to meet.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. They are very confident, have high self-esteem and a strong desire to be the best in all they undertake. Their attitudes to learning are excellent, behaviour is exemplary and pupils work very well in groups. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and has improved since the last inspection. Through a study of different religions, Black History week and the life and work of Mary Seacole, pupils gain a deep understanding of the diversity of cultures in Britain today. Spiritual and moral development is particularly strong and pupils are given plenty of excellent opportunities to marvel at the power of God's creation and the need to make the right moral choices. The work of the school council is of a high order and council members do not hold back in expressing their opinions on how the school can be improved.

The school's efforts to encourage a healthy lifestyle have been extremely successful and even the youngest children know how to look after themselves. Pupils are gaining the necessary literacy, numeracy and ICT skills that they are likely to need in the future for successful economic well-being. Pupils contribute well to the community by participating in the liturgy and Eucharist services, singing for the elderly in Moseley, putting on drama productions such as Scrooge and fundraising for the Acorns and St Mary's Hospice. Attendance is above average. In spite of the long distances that many pupils travel, they arrive in school punctually.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good and have some outstanding features. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good and much progress has been made in developing well structured, independent activities for children. Teachers and support staff are very hard working and totally committed to the pupils in their care. Lessons are planned thoroughly but there are occasions when information from assessment is not used sufficiently well to ensure that higher attaining pupils, especially in the younger classes are sufficiently challenged in writing. This slows down learning as pupils consolidate what they already know and do not acquire new skills at a fast enough rate.

Teachers are passionate about their work and eagerly implement new ideas and respond well to the challenge of using new technology such as interactive whiteboards. Pupils learn well because teachers have created a very stimulating climate for learning as a result of the excellent relationships between staff and pupils. In an outstanding science lesson, pupils made excellent progress because very clear targets were set for group work and pupils were taught how to interact and support one another in group work. Teaching assistants play a vital role in supporting pupils' learning and helping them overcome any difficulties. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities learn effectively because the planning of work takes account of their individual needs and they receive good guidance on how well they are doing.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good and has some outstanding features. It helps pupils develop strong basic skills in reading, writing, mathematics and ICT. All statutory requirements are met and ICT is used well across the curriculum. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is good and offers an appropriate balance of play and the rigorous teaching of basic skills. An excellent range of visits, visitors, after school clubs and residential trips enhance the curriculum and do much to promote pupils' enjoyment of school. Pupils visit many places of interest such as Sarehole Mill and Aston Hall and this brings learning alive for them. This has a very positive impact on their attitudes to learning. Good links are made between subjects but, as yet, opportunities for raising standards in pupils' writing have not been formally identified.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 1**

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. The school guides and supports pupils' academic needs well and pays excellent attention to their pastoral needs. Pupils are adamant in their evaluation of the staff, 'Our teachers know us really well and they know what pushes our buttons, they are always here to help us'. The school is meticulously clean, with beautiful displays of pupils' work. The child protection

procedures are good. Parents, pupils and staff are fully aware of what needs to be done should any difficult situation present itself.

The monitoring of pupils' academic development is good and that of their personal development is outstanding. Targets are challenging and pupils know what they have to do to improve. Partnership with parents is outstanding. They have a monthly surgery where they can come and discuss any issues with staff and receive detailed information about their children's progress. The school works well with outside agencies to provide the best support it can for its pupils. There are good procedures in place to deal with any incidents of bullying or racial harassment.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The school is led and managed well. It is given excellent direction by the headteacher who has been at the school for 20 years and has moved the school from strength to strength. Parents have every confidence in the school and they are totally involved in all aspects of school life. The deputy headteacher and leadership team execute their duties well, keep a regular eye on standards and pupils' progress and have encouraged outstanding links with all support agencies. The governing body provides good support and fulfils all its statutory duties. It has highly effective systems for gathering information on the performance of the school and is fully involved in strategic planning. The school is well placed to sustain improvement because staff are never complacent about their achievements and the school's processes for self-evaluation are good. Teaching and learning are regularly monitored by the headteacher and senior staff and performance management is well linked to targets in the school development plan. This is instrumental in raising standards, especially in the recent progress seen in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2. The leadership and management of the school have effectively achieved their aim of making the school a true Christian community but there is still work to be done to ensure that all curriculum plans include regular opportunities to improve pupils' writing throughout the school.

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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>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	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

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

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1	NA

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	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

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
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**

Thank you so much for making us feel so welcome in your school. We thoroughly enjoyed our stay with you. Here are the findings in relation to what we saw.

We particularly noted these strengths:

- your excellent behaviour, attitudes to learning and the relationships you have with one another and your teachers
- the way your teachers make lessons interesting, how well they look after you and the exciting learning opportunities they plan for you
- the excellent range of after school clubs you attend that keep you healthy
- how well you learn in speaking and listening, reading, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT)
- the good leadership of your headteacher and senior staff
- the way in which the school works with your parents
- your involvement in the community.

We have asked your headteacher and teachers to help you make even better progress in writing by:

- challenging you even further by using information from assessments
- making sure that your senior staff check teachers' planning to ensure that they give you plenty of opportunities to write in different subjects.

We wish you all the best for the future.