



St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 106116
LEA Stockport
Inspection number 277491
Inspection dates 3 May 2006 to 4 May 2006
Reporting inspector Mrs Marie Cordey CfBT Lead Inspector

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

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|------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Type of school | Primary | School address | Foliage Road |
| School category | Voluntary aided | | Brinnington |
| Age range of pupils | 3 to 11 | | Stockport, Cheshire SK5 8AR |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed | Telephone number | 0161 4304601 |
| Number on roll | 186 | Fax number | 0161 4066235 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body | Chair of governors | Ms K Conwell |
| Date of previous inspection | 29 January 2001 | Headteacher | Mr M O'Brien |

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average primary school that draws pupils mainly from the local area. The vast majority of pupils are from a white British background. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

St Bernadette's is a caring school with good features that provides a satisfactory standard of education and satisfactory value for money. The headteacher has raised expectations of performance and provides a strong lead for both staff and pupils. Children in the Nursery and Reception make a good start to their school life because of good support for their personal development and good teaching. Similarly, pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because they receive very effective support. Pupils make satisfactory progress from Year 1 to Year 6, although standards are below average throughout the school. Staff have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses but their evaluation is over-generous except in relation to the Foundation Stage and pupils' personal development. Good quality care, guidance and support, combined with pupils' good personal development, reflect the caring, Catholic nature of the school. The quality of teaching and learning, the curriculum and leadership and management are all satisfactory with some good features. The school rightly recognises the need to raise standards in writing and mathematics. It understands that, as yet, assessment procedures, including teachers' marking and the matching of work to pupils' diverse needs, are not effective enough to do this. Parents and pupils value the school highly. With the newly established leadership team now in place, the headteacher can develop his clear vision for the school and embed in all its work practices aimed at raising standards. There has been satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection and the school has good capacity to improve still further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Sharpen the use of target-setting to better reflect the needs of individual pupils.
- Improve pupils' writing and problem-solving skills in mathematics.
- Achieve consistency in the quality of teachers' marking to inform pupils about how they might improve their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall but standards are below average throughout the school. This reflects a downward trend since 2003 with some improvement shown in 2005. Those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and children in the Foundation Stage achieve well. By the end of their time in the Nursery and Reception classes most children reach their early learning goals and their standards have risen to just below average from a low starting point. Progress slows in Year 1. The school recognises this and is taking action to tackle it. Pupils make satisfactory progress throughout the school because of positive teaching and good support for their personal development. In the 2005 statutory tests, Year 2 pupils reached below average standards in all areas. Writing standards are now beginning to improve through encouragement of pupils' independence and confidence. Year 6 pupils reached below

average standards in all subjects, with few pupils attaining the expected level or higher in English, or the higher level in mathematics or science. Pupils' basic calculation and reading skills are secure but their writing and problem-solving skills are not at the same level. However, booster classes and planned revision in the core subjects are beginning to take effect and pupils in Year 6 are on course to meet their challenging targets.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. They like school and their teachers. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are good and they enjoy lessons. Members of the school council take their responsibilities seriously: they explained with pride their recent work on improving outside play areas and using their gardening skills. Pupils undertake the role of play leaders and school council members with enthusiasm and commitment. Their willingness to take on responsibility and the development of their independence has improved since the previous inspection. They know how to keep healthy and safe. Pupils' attendance is broadly in line with the national average. The school works closely with parents and external agencies to promote attendance and this is beginning to be effective. The very caring and inclusive atmosphere plays a key role in ensuring that all pupils feel valued, and links with the church are strong. Various fundraising schemes develop pupils' enterprise skills and their ability to work in a team. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall and the pupils are polite, confident and welcoming. However, their understanding of different faiths and cultures is only satisfactory.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall with some good features. In the Foundation Stage good quality teaching helps children to make good progress in their learning from a low starting point. Where teaching is good, lessons have a brisk pace, pupils are highly motivated and are actively engaged in challenging tasks. A good example of this was in a Year 5 mathematics lesson where pupils' curiosity in working with shapes was well stimulated. Staff work very effectively to support the progress of pupils who find learning difficult, and consequently, they make good progress. Pupils are becoming more involved in assessing their own and others' work which is beginning to help to consolidate their learning. Teachers plan lessons carefully, but do not always sufficiently match activities to all pupils' learning needs. The result is that a small number of middle and higher attaining pupils are not always achieving as well as they should because they are not challenged enough. Recent improvements in the use of assessment information, target setting and marking are helping pupils to understand what they need to do next to improve. However, these are not yet sufficiently embedded to cater for the full range of pupils' needs and abilities.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory overall and meets national requirements. Provision for personal and social education is good and helps prepare pupils to contribute to society. It gives them opportunities to work together, to reflect, and to express their feelings. The school is beginning to improve the provision to develop pupils' skills in information and communication technology (ICT). The provision for gifted and talented pupils is improving and staff are trying hard to address their needs in class and through good links with outside agencies. The curriculum supports the development of healthy lifestyles and pupils' safety. Although good provision is made for children in the Foundation Stage and for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, the curriculum is inconsistent in meeting the full range of needs for middle and higher attaining pupils. The curriculum is enriched through a range of educational visits, visitors and out of school activities. A particularly good example of community partnership involves the school council working closely with parents to improve the school grounds.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Good quality care, guidance and support are having a positive impact on pupils' personal development and well-being. Robust procedures for child protection are in place and good attention is paid to promoting healthy lifestyle choices. There is outstanding provision for helping children to prepare for starting school; for example, the 'stay and play' scheme for parents. Good transition arrangements ease the move to secondary school. Staff are caring and approachable leading to the pupils feeling cared for and secure. Pupils care for each other well, for instance the use of Year 6 pupils to help younger pupils at break times. These are happy occasions and in keeping with the Catholic ethos of the school. As yet, target setting and assessment systems do not fully guide and support individual pupils' needs. Very good school support and links with external agencies enable vulnerable pupils and those with additional learning needs to make good progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management at all levels are satisfactory, bolstered by a strong headteacher who is a good role model for the newly established senior leadership team. The headteacher is positive about what he wants for the school and has a clear focus for improving standards and understands how to set about this. This strategy will further involve and develop the senior leadership team and middle managers as they monitor the impact of actions taken. The headteacher and the governors are committed to making St Bernadette's a happy and positive experience for the pupils and this is reflected in the pupils' good personal development and well-being and the good provision for their care, guidance and support. The headteacher has worked well

to improve achievement and to look after and celebrate the achievement and hard work of pupils and staff. Pupils' progress has begun to improve and staff are more settled after a period of instability. Parents support the school and respond to the school's needs. Responses to questionnaires show that they are very pleased with the school. Clearer analysis of target-setting for the pupils and a more comprehensive tracking system have already begun to target individual pupils for more support. Plans to raise achievement and standards rightly include an awareness of the need to adapt teaching and assessment to individual need and to involve the pupils more in their learning. Generally accurate self-evaluation is based on monitoring quality and performance and this is reflected in the drive to get all teaching up to the best. Governance is good; the governors are very supportive of the school and hold it to account through challenging meetings, evaluations of the school's work and committed participation in the life of the school.

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Inspection judgements

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

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 | 3 | 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 | 2 | 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? | 3 | 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

Thank you for welcoming us to your school; you were very friendly and looked after us well. We would like to share with you what we thought of your school.

- You really like being at St Bernadette's and your parents and people in the area also like it very much.
- You receive good help from the support staff.
- Your behaviour and attitudes are good because of the way you look after each other, work in lessons and care about people.
- Your headteacher is a good leader who helps you to develop.

This is what we have asked the school to do next to help it improve.

- Help you to improve your writing and your problem-solving skills in mathematics because they are not quite as good as your work in reading and calculations.
- Make sure all your work is marked consistently so that you know how you are doing and how to improve.
- Plan your work to match what each and every one of you is capable of.