



# St Benedict's Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 111323  
**LEA** Cheshire  
**Inspection number** 278656  
**Inspection dates** 27 February 2006 to 28 February 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Mr Joe Peacock CfBT Lead Inspector

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Hall Road
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided		Handforth
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11		Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 3AE
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01625 520 207
<b>Number on roll</b>	190	<b>Fax number</b>	01625 520 207
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mrs T Harrison
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	7 June 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr J Gallogly

<b>Age group</b> 4 to 11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 27 February 2006 - 28 February 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 278656
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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

The school is smaller than average. It is situated on an attractive semi-rural site on the outskirts of Handforth. There are a small number of pupils who have English as an additional language. The proportion entitled to free school meals and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are both well below average. Attainment on entry to the Reception class this year is above average. The headteacher is seconded to another school at present but returned to support the acting headteacher for the inspection period.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school with some good, and a few outstanding, features. It is giving satisfactory value for money. Inspection judgements agree with the school's own self-evaluation, which has proved to be very accurate. All children enter the school with skills that are above those normally expected, particularly in communication, language and literacy. In the Reception class, most make good progress in all areas of the Foundation Stage curriculum because they are articulate, well-behaved and confident. Standards in English, mathematics and science are above average by Year 6. Most pupils achieve satisfactorily as they move through the school. In information and communication technology (ICT), standards in Year 6 are below those expected, largely due to gaps in pupils' knowledge and experience, caused by inadequate resources. Those pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because of the quality of support they receive. Parents of the few pupils who have English as an additional language are particularly pleased with their children's good progress.

The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, but is good in some classes. The assessment of pupils' progress is satisfactory in English and mathematics, but not sufficiently well developed in other subjects. Parents are extremely supportive. They appreciate their excellent relationships with staff. The acting headteacher knows the school well and has correctly identified areas for improvement. Some progress has been made in addressing previous issues about assessing pupils' progress and evaluating the quality of teaching, but the pace of change has been too slow. As a result, procedures for subject coordinators to monitor the quality of teaching and learning are not sufficiently well developed at present. Governance is satisfactory. The time is right for all governors to become more proactive and to help bring about improvement within set time limits. Inspectors judge the school's capacity to further improve as satisfactory.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Act promptly to ensure that improvements in assessment and the monitoring of teaching and learning, identified in the previous inspection, are addressed.
- In ICT, improve standards and resources by implementing the final sections of the current action plan, so that pupils are able to undertake a wider range of work.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

Standards are above average in Year 2 and in Year 6. Pupils' progress is satisfactory overall. In Reception, most children make good progress and many will exceed the Early Learning Goals well before the end of their Reception year, because they enter with above average skills. Their progress in writing and in speaking and listening skills is particularly good.

In the 2005 national tests for seven-year-olds, standards in reading, writing and mathematics were broadly average, reflecting the potential of the year group. There is no significant difference in attainment between boys and girls in the current Year 2 class, with all pupils achieving above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. A strong emphasis on improving writing throughout the school has helped to raise literacy standards for boys and for those pupils who have English as an additional language.

Year 6 pupils' performance in the 2005 national tests was above average in English, mathematics and science. The proportion attaining at the higher Level 5 was significantly above average in English and science. Inspection evidence clearly shows that these standards have been maintained. The school has correctly identified the need to further increase opportunities in mathematics, for pupils to solve problems. In ICT, Year 6 pupils' knowledge of spreadsheets, databases and control technology is inadequate.

The progress of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and for those who have English as an additional language, is good because of the additional support that they receive. Pupils who previously struggled with aspects of their work generally attain national expectations by the time they leave the school.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Inspectors agree with the school's assessment. Pupils' personal development and well-being are good overall. In the Reception class, however, the number of children, lack of space and restricted access to the outdoor area limits opportunities for children to work and play independently.

Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is outstanding. All appear to enjoy school and show respect and consideration for one another. Within a strong Catholic and family ethos, pupils willingly accept the many opportunities to take responsibility and are cheerful, polite and helpful. An effective school council has been established and pupils take their involvement in this seriously. Attendance is currently in line with the national average.

Pupil's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. Pupils' self-esteem and confidence are successfully developed, because their different achievements are valued and rewarded by the staff. All gain a satisfactory understanding of some world religions and cultures through assemblies and lessons. Religious festivals for different world religions are celebrated and the study of Spanish language and culture has recently been introduced in Year 4. Pupils understand very well how to keep safe and most invariably eat healthy snacks at breaktimes. Good punctuality and their ability to get on well with others are good starting points for future success in the workplace.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. This matches the school's own evaluation. In a few of the lessons seen, the quality of teaching was good but, on one occasion, it was inadequate. This was because of a lack of challenge in the task given to pupils.

In most lessons observed, pupils' learning was greatly helped by their excellent behaviour and interest in their work. In lessons where the quality of teaching was good, teachers' planning was effective, with clear lesson objectives. Teachers explained lesson content well and carefully matched work to pupils' needs. Teachers were helped by high quality contributions from support staff and this was of particular benefit for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Good teaching was also characterised by stimulating tasks and good relationships. In one lesson observed in Year 3, pupils greatly enjoyed their recital of poetry. Poems were presented with expression and good humour, and the lesson contributed well to pupils' speaking skills. Good provision is made for pupils who have English as an additional language.

In Reception, a more formal teaching style was adopted on occasions because of the cramped accommodation. This limited children's freedom of movement around the class and their interaction with one another. The assessment of pupils' progress and attainment in English and mathematics is satisfactory, and teachers use the information well to set individual targets for pupils. The assessment of pupils' progress in other subjects is underdeveloped. All teachers mark pupils' work very carefully and provide good guidance on how they can improve it.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

The curriculum provided satisfactorily meets pupils' needs. Appropriate emphasis is placed on English, mathematics and science and this contributes to sound progress by pupils. Improvements are being made in the provision for ICT as the school has a clear action plan. However, these have come too late for older pupils, who show a lack of recall of important areas of the subject, such as using spreadsheets because of previous gaps in their experience. Other subjects of the curriculum are adequately covered, although evidence of the provision for design and technology was limited. The school is developing its curriculum through the introduction of Spanish.

Pupils report that issues to do with healthy lifestyles and safety are well covered. There is a good range of clubs in the school and these are much appreciated by pupils. Particular prominence is given to music clubs. The good quality of instrumental playing enables pupils to accompany singing in assemblies. There is a good range of school visits.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 2

The care and welfare of pupils are good. Pupils say that they feel safe and happy at school. Parents also express great confidence in the school and all responses to the parents' questionnaire indicate a high level of satisfaction with the care and support arrangements. As one parent puts it, 'the school is a happy family'.

The school is a secure environment with proper assessment of risks and a good level of first aid support. Child protection arrangements are appropriate. There is no evidence of bullying, and pupils indicate that often disagreements are resolved at an early stage. Opportunities exist for older pupils to offer support to children in Reception.

Arrangements for pastoral guidance are good. Teachers and adults in the school know pupils well and they feel comfortable in seeking help. Arrangements for the tracking of pupils' progress are the subject of proposals for improvement, as currently there is insufficient information about how well pupils are performing in subjects other than English and mathematics.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The recognised expertise of the headteacher is being used to support another local school. Despite some changes to key members of staff, the headteacher has firmly established an effective leadership team. The acting headteacher, supported by an acting deputy headteacher, is rising to the challenge of maintaining the good atmosphere for learning which exists in the school and to further improving standards. The acting headteacher and her staff are beginning to work well as a team and have the overwhelming support of the parents. At the meeting for parents, they were emphatic that they consider this to be an excellent school and keen for inspectors to recognise its many strengths.

The school has a clear picture of its strengths and priorities for development. This is reflected in the overall accuracy of the school's self-evaluation. The secondment and recent staff changes, which have brought many young teachers to the school, have been well managed to minimise the effect on pupils' progress. Unfortunately, it has meant that deadlines for some development work on management aspects, such as re-defining the role of newly appointed subject coordinators, has been delayed. Development work on issues from the previous report is not yet fully completed. Systems to assess pupils' progress in more detail in all subjects, and to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching, are progressing but are not yet fully in place. Governors carry out their role satisfactorily. For instance, they plan their budget prudently to ensure fluctuating pupil numbers do not overly interfere with the school's strong staffing position. The time is right for governors to strengthen their role in ensuring that priorities for development are given sufficient emphasis, and planned improvement programmes are successfully achieved within a set timescale. The school's capacity to improve further is satisfactory.

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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>	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	3	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>	3	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	3	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>	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2	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>	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	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	3	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 for helping us when we visited your school. We really enjoyed talking to everyone and looking at your work. The other things that we particularly liked were:

- how much all of you enjoy school
- the excellent relationships that you and your parents have with all the school staff
- your outstanding behaviour in lessons and around the school
- how much support your parents give to your school. They really appreciate what the staff are doing to help you to learn new skills in subjects like music and Spanish
- how well your headteacher and acting headteacher know the school and their clear view about the improvements that are necessary.

In order to make your school even better, we are asking your headteacher, staff and governors to do the following things:

- as quickly as possible, give your teachers the time to check the quality of teaching and learning in all subjects, so that they can spot anything which could be improved to help raise standards
- make sure that planned improvements for ICT, and systems to check on how well you are doing in all subjects, happen within the set time limits.

Thank you again for helping us with the inspection of your school. We hope that you will carry on helping your teachers to make it even better!