



St Bridget's Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 111377
LEA Warrington
Inspection number 278672
Inspection dates 3 April 2006 to 4 April 2006
Reporting inspector Mr Joe Peacock CfBT Lead Inspector

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Capesthorne Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Poulton-with-Fearnhead
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Warrington, Cheshire WA2 0ER
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01925 811873
Number on roll	194	Fax number	01925 816498
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs G Pendergast
Date of previous inspection	22 November 1999	Headteacher	Mr Gary Cunningham

Age group 4 to 11	Inspection dates 3 April 2006 - 4 April 2006	Inspection number 278672
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is situated in a residential area to the east of Warrington and is smaller than average. Almost all pupils are from a white British background. The proportion entitled to free school meals is well above average and the number with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) is above the national average. There is a significant amount of mobility caused by pupils joining and leaving during term time. Over the past three years, the school has been totally refurbished and last year, a new headteacher was appointed. The school has a Healthy School Award.

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, which is exactly how the school sees itself. It provides good value for money. The school has made good progress since it was last inspected, partly because the new headteacher has such an enthusiastic approach and built a strong team spirit among the staff. Pupils' personal development and well-being are good with outstanding features being the provision for their spiritual and moral development. Pupils enjoy coming to school and parents appreciate the exceptionally high level of care for all. Parents say that their children succeed here, even if they have not done so well elsewhere. The good curriculum and good quality of care, support and guidance demonstrate the school's strength in recognising the needs of its pupils.

Attainment on entry to Reception is well below the level expected for the children's age, especially in the early stages of reading and writing. Children in this class make good progress owing to the good quality of provision for them. Standards are below average by the end of Year 6 in English and mathematics, but in line with those expected in science. Pupils' achievement is good owing to the good teaching they receive. The quality of writing and mathematics is improving steadily as a result of the effective strategies, which have been introduced.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has developed the role of subject leaders well, but their observations of the quality of teaching in lessons are not yet sufficiently rigorous to bring about improvement at a faster pace. Governance is good. The governors are deeply committed to the school and are fully involved in identifying areas for development. The school has made good progress since 1999 and it has the capacity to continue improving.

What the school should do to improve further

The governors, headteacher and staff should use the effective methods that have already begun to raise standards in writing, particularly in Year 2 and mathematics throughout the school to:

- raise standards in English and mathematics by the end of year 6
- ensure that subject leaders evaluate lessons to identify aspects of improvement related to progress and achievement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards in 2005, at the end of Year 6, were below average in English, average in mathematics and above average in science. Current attainment is not as good, but circumstances are greatly different: English and mathematics are both below average. In the present Year 6, 46% of the children did not start in Reception. Nevertheless, pupils are making good progress in English and mathematics, irrespective of when they started. Achievement is good partly because the school sets challenging targets

and pupils are beginning to meet them. Higher attaining pupils invariably achieve their potential and pupils who find work difficult achieve well in relation to their capabilities.

Attainment on entry to Reception covers the full spectrum but overall, it is well below the level normally expected for children of this age. Boys' language skills are a particular weakness. The good quality of teaching ensures that children achieve well and make good progress in all areas of learning. Provision for children's personal, social and emotional development and early language skills are strengths. As a result, children gain confidence and their progress in writing accelerates very well. A strong emphasis on writing skills in all subjects, throughout the school, is beginning to have a beneficial impact on standards. In Year 2, for example, standards in writing are now average.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils really like their school and say that 'teachers listen to us.' Their personal development is at least good in every aspect. As a result, all behave very well and have a good attitude towards school. Provision is outstanding for pupils' spiritual and moral development. All pupils have good opportunities to reflect on big ideas, to pray and to learn how to resolve issues and differences. They respond well to the school's successful provision by contributing to the school community and beyond. Most have a very good understanding of their responsibilities to others in their school. Pupils with LDD and those new to the school settle in quickly because classmates offer a kind hand and a friendly smile. This makes them feel safe and stress-free.

When exploring suggestions and checking on projects, the school council fulfils an important role in following up ideas and matters of concern to pupils. They express barely a worry about bullying or racism. The school values the customs and cultures of other faith families or heritage and there are developing links with other countries. Pupils have a sound appreciation and awareness of the diversity of cultures within and beyond Britain today.

Pupils drink water in school when they wish to, eat healthily and get involved in sports, taking the lead from exemplary staff role models. They know what they need to do to be safe, follow a healthy lifestyle and avoid the dangers of smoking and substance abuse. Coupled with their good attitudes to learning, this is helping to secure their future economic well-being. The rate of attendance has improved and is close to average because the school's new procedures are now more robust.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good and as a result, all pupils, including the few from minority ethnic families, make good progress. Pupils readily say that one of the things they most like about the school is 'the teachers'. As one new to the school noted, 'they make lessons fun.' Consequently, relationships in classes are really good

and pupils are eager to learn. The teamwork between teachers, teaching assistants and learning mentor is particularly successful. Their work adds an additional layer of learning for pupils with LDD that also helps them to manage better their own behaviour. These pupils often make good progress in the skills for writing and mathematics, and the habits they gain for learning throughout life.

All teachers plan lessons well and pupils are told exactly what they need to learn. They mark work well and assess work accurately: so all pupils know how they can improve. Most lessons challenge pupils well, but even in lessons that are good, teachers could ask more challenging questions to encourage better explanations for answers. In some other lessons, teachers talked for overly long periods, especially when introducing lessons and, as a result, some pupils lost concentration. Consequently, in these lessons, progress is satisfactory rather than good.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Pupils say that their work is exciting. Their views reflect the impact of the school's good curriculum and wide range of activities offered. All statutory requirements are met. Pupils' improving skills in writing and good provision in information and communication technology (ICT) are a result of the school's plans to further develop skills for their future. The good quality curriculum for personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) has built on previous work of the school and this makes a huge difference to pupils' self-esteem.

Literacy, numeracy and ICT skills are promoted creatively. The school has a strong programme of additional provision to develop basic skills that helps pupils new to the school and those with LDD. There is opportunity to learn French, to develop a talent to play an instrument and to shine in sports. From Reception onwards, all these features ensure that pupils leave well prepared for the next stages of their education and have the skills needed for work in the future.

The school helps pupils to contribute to the community of the school and life of the Church. There are plenty of opportunities to enjoy activities and clubs after school. They are keen to take part, extend their skills and socialise.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The overall quality of care, guidance and support is good. Care for pupils is outstanding. Staff know pupils and their families well and go out of their way to meet pupils' individual needs and help them settle in when they start. Pupils think that the staff look after them well and deal effectively with any incidents of bullying. The Learning Mentor plays a particularly effective role in monitoring attendance and supporting pupils with behaviour problems. Child protection and health and safety routines are in place and known by staff. Parents are impressed with the way children who experience difficulties in other schools quickly gain a more positive attitude after a short time at St Bridget's. Systems to check on pupils' progress in most subjects are

good. Careful assessments, after they start, quickly identify pupils' individual needs and they are guided well in their learning thereafter. Specialist support is readily available for pupils with LDD.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The recently appointed and extremely enthusiastic headteacher has a justified ambition to raise standards in English and mathematics. He has carried the staff with him by creating a strong team spirit. This is demonstrated by the fact that they all take part in a weekly keep fit routine. He is supported well by two conscientious assistant headteachers. Decisive action plans which focus on ways to improve the quality of teaching and improve standards in writing and mathematics throughout the school have been implemented and are successfully raising standards.

The accuracy of the school's self-evaluation is good. Plans are in place to improve the school, but criteria to measure the success of each are not yet clearly defined. Subject leaders are working more effectively: they work in teams, supporting one another most effectively. Good procedures to monitor teachers' planning and to track pupils' progress have been implemented. Methods to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning are in place, but are not yet sharp enough to quicken the pace of improvement in achievement and standards. This is because subject leaders do not have enough chances to see lessons. Governors are deeply committed to the school and carry out their role effectively. The Chair of Governors is highly regarded by staff and governors alike who admire her dedication to the school and its pupils. Her knowledge of the school is first class as she visits weekly and voluntarily works alongside teachers to support pupils' learning.

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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?	2	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	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

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	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

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?	2	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?	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

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 helping us when we visited your school. We really enjoyed talking to everyone and looking at your work. The things that we particularly liked were:

- how much all of you really like your teachers and enjoy school
- the excellent level of care for each of you shown by all staff; it helps you to settle in quickly and do well
- the very close links that you have with the church and the way Father Gordon knows everyone so well
- how brilliantly you all behave in lessons and around school
- the enthusiasm of your teachers and teaching assistants; they work so hard to make your lessons fun; you like that!
- the good range of activities provided for you, including those after school
- your new headteacher is doing a fantastic job with good support from staff and governors; we particularly liked the strong team spirit amongst staff.

We are asking your headteacher, staff and governors to do the following things:

- carry on working hard to raise standards in English and mathematics; we hope that you will keep on improving your writing in particular
- give your teachers the time to check the quality of teaching and learning in all subjects by observing lessons; this should help them to spot anything which could be improved to raise standards further.

Thank you again for helping us with the inspection of your school. We hope that you will all keep trying hard to help your teachers to make it even better!