



St Bernadette's RC Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 111705
LEA Middlesbrough
Inspection number 278757
Inspection dates 23 May 2006 to 24 May 2006
Reporting inspector Mrs Moira Fitzpatrick

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Cookgate
School category	Voluntary aided		Nunthorpe
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		Middlesbrough TS7 0PZ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01642 310198
Number on roll	252	Fax number	01642 314801
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Monsignor D C Hogan
Date of previous inspection	1 July 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Mary Cobbold

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
3 to 11	23 May 2006 - 24 May 2006	278757

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is about average size, with nearly all children coming from Roman Catholic, White British families. Only a very small number of children speak English as an additional language. The school accepts a high proportion of children from outside its catchment because of its high reputation in the community. Most children are from advantaged backgrounds and the percentage eligible for free school meals is below average. So too is the percentage of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with a Statement of Special Educational Need. The attainment of children when they start Nursery is generally typical for their age.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Inspectors agree with the school that its overall effectiveness is good, and that it has a number of outstanding features. It also gives very good value for money. Children's achievement is good and they attain above average standards because teaching is good and their curriculum is excellent in developing their interests and extending their experiences. Where assessment is used to good effect, children's progress is particularly good, but this is not the case in all classes. Provision and standards in the Foundation Stage are excellent; children all make good progress to reach and often exceed the goals set for five-year-olds. Children's personal development is excellent because they receive outstanding care and guidance and vulnerable children are very well supported to do as well as others. Children willingly accept responsibility and show exceptional awareness of the needs of others because of the excellent example set by adults in the school. The school's successes are continually built upon through the very good leadership of the headteacher with an effective team of senior managers and governors. Some subject leaders are newly appointed and their contribution to raising standards is not fully developed. The headteacher's very effective leadership sets an exemplary tone for learning, and promotes the school's Christian ethos and a clear philosophy that here, every child does matter. The capacity for further improvement is very good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Extend to all classes the effective practice of using assessment to plan work accurately for different groups of children.
- Develop the role of recently appointed subject leaders in evaluating the work of the school and in contributing to raising standards.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children's achievement is good and standards are above average. The children enter the Nursery with attainment that is typical for their age and by Year 6 have progressed well to reach standards that are above average. The rate of progress increases in the junior classes as the children get older and in 2005, children in Year 6 gained above average results in national tests in English, mathematics and science. The school's trend of improvement is better than the national picture. Because a small number of lower attaining pupils did not reach the targets set for them in English, the school has focused successfully on improvements in this subject. Many children read very well, and some of their writing is superb. Year 6 children are on course to meet the challenging targets set for them in this year's tests.

Standards in Year 2 are consistently above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics and have been for the last five years. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well in all areas of learning. By the end of Reception children meet the goals set for their learning and a good proportion exceed them. Children who have

learning difficulties and/or disabilities make the same progress as others because they are well supported by staff and their peers.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Children's personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. Promoting children's self-esteem and their ability to value and care for others is central to the school's Christian ethos. Behaviour is excellent throughout the school, so that children always feel safe and happy and are able to concentrate fully on their learning. From the earliest age they show great enthusiasm and enjoyment in their learning and are keen to work hard to please their teachers. The high quality of the work they produce reflects the pride they have in their school and their own efforts. Children's good attendance and punctuality demonstrate their love of school and all that happens there.

Children of all ages adopt the school's approach to healthy living by making healthy choices at lunchtime. They take plenty of exercise through the many opportunities offered. Children of all ages show an exceptional awareness of the needs of others and are constantly seen supporting and helping each other, as when a Year 5 girl intervened to help a younger pupil put her daisy chain in a safe place. Children make an excellent contribution to their own and the wider community through their willing acceptance of responsibilities, the work of the school council in improving their school, their frequent forays into the local community to entertain and their very generous fund raising for numerous charities. By the end of Year 6, children are very well prepared for all aspects of life in the secondary school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good overall. A high proportion of good and better lessons were seen during inspection, from the Nursery to the end of Year 2 and in Year 6. The very good learning in these classes comes from the excellence of teachers' planning, which is based on a very good assessment of children's needs. These teachers assess children's learning in detail, and then set tasks which ensure that work is challenging, interesting and rewards children's efforts with success. Where teachers are following the school's recently introduced target setting system, children are well supported to assess their own progress and take a lively interest in their own learning. Children as young as six are happy to describe their targets and proudly show how they have met them in a piece of writing. In discussion, children said that they enjoy learning so much because of the many practical activities they do and because of the frequent use that is made of new technologies such as interactive whiteboards, computers and video cameras. In the best lessons, the pace is always brisk and children clearly relish being under pressure of time to meet the teachers' high expectations. Where teachers'

assessments are not used sufficiently in drawing up plans for lessons, it takes the sharp edge off the quality of learning, because the needs of different groups of pupils are not catered for with the precision evident elsewhere. Teachers all make good use of teaching assistants especially to support the learning of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is well developed and enriched. In the Nursery and Reception classes, excellent planning ensures that the wide range of children's capabilities and needs are very well met. Additional support for children with delayed speech and language development is proving very effective. Elsewhere in the school, teachers' planning adapts the curriculum well for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The use of key skills is very well planned so that children have frequent opportunities to hone their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. Enrichment of the curriculum through many visits and visitors, such as members of world faiths, artists, writers and musicians enthral the children who derive great pleasure from increasing their knowledge and understanding of the richness of the world in which they live. Out-of-school clubs, and activities for more able and talented children, are highly valued by the children who are keen attenders throughout the year. The school is currently developing its provision for out-of-school clubs for younger children, which reflects its focus on constantly improving provision.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school provides an outstanding level of care, guidance and support for its pupils. Arrangements for child protection, health and safety and risk assessment are very secure. Children are made aware of their part in staying safe through the many visiting experts who give them advice and when in Year 6 they carry out their own risk assessment before taking part in the residential visit to North Wales. Parents have very high levels of confidence in the school's care and support for their children. As one parent commented, 'My child couldn't be in a better school. I feel so lucky.' Excellent relationships at all levels make children feel safe and secure.

Teachers know children well, personally and academically, and are alert to their needs. They are excellent role models in the care they give the children who in turn adopt this caring approach in their own relationships. Their tracking of children's learning is well embedded and children's involvement in assessing their learning is developing well this year as they are guided to recognise their successes and see where they can improve further. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are very well supported by teachers' planning and the very good support provided by teaching assistants to learn as well as their classmates.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher is very effective in promoting the Christian ethos and very positive climate for learning in which the children thrive. The monitoring and evaluation of the school's work are well established. Senior managers and governors are closely involved by helping the school to make an accurate evaluation of its provision. Senior leaders have made a major contribution to improving assessment and target setting which is helping to raise achievement in the Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and for older children in Key Stage 2. These developments are not yet fully implemented throughout Key Stage 2; nor are all subject leaders yet fully involved in raising standards in their subjects. The school has already begun work on developing these areas through its current improvement plan. Parents are delighted with what the school offers and their role in making suggestions for improvement. One commented, 'The school is led from the top by a great headteacher who so obviously cares for the children and parents'. The headteacher has ensured very good progress on addressing issues of achievement in writing that the school recently identified. The school has made very good progress since the last inspection and is extremely well placed for further improvement.

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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	1	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	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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	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	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	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?	1	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	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	1	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	1	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

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23 May 2006

Dear Children

Thank you all very much for making us so welcome when we visited your school. We found it very interesting talking with you and watching you at work and play. There are so many very good things about your school that we cannot list them all in a letter, so here are a few that we liked most.

We think that you have very caring ways and look after each other very well, by helping each other to work hard and by being kind to each other in the playground. Your behaviour is excellent, which means that everyone can get on and work hard and you all do. This is why your learning is good and why you get so much fun out of school.

We agree with you that you have some wonderful opportunities to learn about many exciting things in different ways and were delighted that you get so much out of learning from visiting experts.

We agree with you and your parents that your teachers know you very well and take very good care of you while you are in school. It is very nice to be able to tell them how much you appreciate it.

Finally, we were bowled over by the way you take on responsibility and organise things so well. We saw children in every class looking after equipment and tidying up quickly so no time was wasted. We heard about all the wonderful things you do through the school council to make school better and think that you have some great ideas. Your generous fund raising for people who need support and care is tremendous and shows you are thoughtful about the needs of others. No wonder we had such a lovely time with you all!

To make things even better we have asked your headteacher and teachers to make learning equally good in all classes so that you all keep moving forward at a good rate.

Every good wish for the future, and thank you again for being so kind to us.

Yours sincerely
Moira Fitzpatrick
(Lead inspector)