



St Bede's Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 116380
LEA Hampshire LEA
Inspection number 279808
Inspection dates 14 November 2005 to 15 November 2005
Reporting inspector John Earish AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Popley Way
School category	Voluntary aided		Basingstoke
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Hampshire RG24 9DX
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01256473379
Number on roll	240	Fax number	01256463860
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Richard Benton
Date of previous inspection	27 September 2000	Headteacher	Acting: Mrs Jacqueline Davies

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

St Bede's is a popular school on the northern outskirts of Basingstoke for pupils aged four to eleven years. It has recently been through a difficult period due to the long term absence of both the headteacher and the acting deputy. There are 240 pupils on roll who come from a wide geographic area. There is a small but growing number of pupils who are at the early stages of acquiring English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is 4.5%, which is below the national average. The number of pupils with learning difficulties is also below average. The school is being led by an acting headteacher until the headteacher designate takes up his post in the New Year.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

St Bede's Primary School believes that its overall effectiveness is good and the inspectors agree. Self-evaluation is accurate and is being used to successfully bring about improvement. The school has particular strengths in the leadership and management of the acting headteacher, senior managers and governors. The acting headteacher leads with conviction and has skilfully ensured continuity by involving senior teachers and the headteacher designate in planning for the future. The school provides good value for money. The standards reached by learners are good. Children in the Foundation Stage receive a good start to their education and make good progress. Recent improvements to the monitoring of pupils identified with learning difficulties and of those who speak English as an additional language are helping them achieve as well as they can. Pupils like coming to school, behave well, help and support each other and are eager to learn. This is the result of the very strong emphasis on the promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This contributes to the orderly atmosphere in the school. The quality of education is good and is enabling pupils to achieve well. Teaching is mostly good, but this is not consistent in all classes. The school has made good progress in remedying the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection. This evidence of improvement already achieved combined with the commitment of the staff and governors, suggest that the school has good capacity to make further improvements.

What the school should do to improve further

Continue to monitor the progress of pupils identified with learning difficulties and of those who speak English as an additional language so they achieve as well as they can.* Improve teaching so that it is of consistently good or better quality across all classes to maintain the rapid momentum of learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well. The results of national tests in 2004 show that pupils aged 11 years achieved well above average standards in English, mathematics and science. Very good numbers of more able pupils achieved the higher levels in all three subjects. In addition, the progress between Years 3 to 6 was significantly higher than the national average and shows that pupils are doing well. Pupils' achievement has been steadily improving since 2000. The provisional national tests results for 2005 show that pupils' performance dipped, particularly in mathematics. This had been accurately predicted by the school based on the composition of the cohort. However, the Year 6 pupils are making good progress and achieving well. In 2004, the number of pupils aged 7 years achieving the expected levels in reading, writing and mathematics was below average, with a satisfactory number achieving the higher levels. The school has tackled this underachievement determinedly with good effect. In 2005, the number of pupils reaching the expected levels in reading and mathematics were satisfactory, and in

writing it was good. Good numbers of more able pupils achieved the higher levels in reading and writing, but fewer managed this in mathematics. Children in the reception classes get a good start to their education. When they start school, many have levels that are below those expected for their age. Children quickly settle because of the interesting range of activities designed for them and the support they are given. They make good progress and most are likely to achieve the learning goals expected at this age. Pupils with learning difficulties are making satisfactory progress. Recent changes to the provision for these groups show that the pupils' learning skills are improving.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development is very good and is underpinned by the school's strong Christian focus. Pupils have a well developed sense of right and wrong, and show respect for their own and others' cultural traditions, values and beliefs. Behaviour is good throughout the school, due to high expectations and very good relationships between all members of its community. Pupils enjoy coming to school and this is demonstrated in their good attendance and enthusiastic participation in the many extra-curricular activities. The school council represents the views of pupils and has suggested changes which have been taken up by the school, such as improvements to the playground and classrooms. Pupils say it helps them express their views clearly and respect the opinions of others. The school actively promotes healthy life styles. Pupils eagerly explain the need for a healthy diet, taking exercise and avoiding harmful substances. Good links with the community enhance provision and contribute further to their personal qualities. Pupils willingly take on extra responsibilities, raise money for charities and care for others. For example, they take gifts of flowers to local senior citizens.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching is good overall. The school is working towards increasing the proportion of good and outstanding teaching across all classes. One feature of the good teaching is that the teachers explain to the pupils what they are to learn so they have a clear understanding of what they must achieve by the end of the lesson. The teachers generally give clear instructions to pupils and this helps them to settle quickly to their work. However, when teaching is satisfactory, too much time is spent introducing the learning activity and the momentum for rapid learning is lost. As the school seeks to improve teaching, it is successfully developing a wider range of teaching methods to support pupils with learning difficulties or English as an additional language. The marking of work is thorough and supportive. Pupils say it helps them to improve. The last few minutes of each lesson is set aside to assess the extent of the pupils' learning. Teachers use this very well to praise what pupils do well and

indicate what they must do to improve. Recent changes to the teaching of English, mathematics and science by ability in Years 5 and 6 are improving the quality of pupils' learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and matches the needs of the pupils well. There is good provision for literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology. The Foundation Stage curriculum is well-planned and provides children with a good start to their education. The pupils' understanding of how to stay safe and healthy is promoted effectively through assemblies, displays, and personal, social and health education. Recent changes have been made to learning activities organised for pupils with learning difficulties. As a result pupils' ability to learn is improving. There are a good range of activities that enrich the curriculum, particularly in sport. Pupils have expert coaching at lunchtimes and regularly represent the school in matches and tournaments. Lunch time activities such as 'Huff and Puff' and the use of play equipment contribute well to pupils' physical well-being. Additional activities such as music clubs, visits and residential activities add much to pupils' enjoyment and learning during their time at the school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school judges these aspects as good and inspectors agree. Pupils feel safe and secure in school, and say there is always someone they can turn to who will help them if they have a problem. The school also provides counselling when it is needed. Pupils who may be at risk or vulnerable are identified early and child protection procedures are clear. The school makes effective links with local agencies involved in promoting pupils' health, safety and welfare and supporting pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. There are very good procedures for promoting good behaviour and pupils confirm that unacceptable behaviour or bullying is dealt with quickly and sensitively. Teachers provide pupils with clear guidance about how they can improve their work. Pupils say that teachers clearly explain how they can do even better and find their written comments helpful and encouraging. This is a good example of the impact of the school's care and support on increasing pupils' independence and confidence.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership and management are good. Despite recent difficulties with staffing, the acting headteacher has quickly and accurately assessed the strengths and weaknesses of the school and the action required to bring about improvement. Examples of successful improvements include changes to the classroom environment and reorganising the teaching of English, mathematics and science in ability groups in Year 5 and 6 which are having a positive impact on learning. School self evaluation is

accurate, and has been used effectively to inform the plans to secure further improvements. The governing body has a thorough understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and carry out their roles and responsibilities conscientiously. The school works hard to involve parents in school life and in their children's learning. Parents are very supportive of the school. This is confirmed by a recent evaluation of parents' views following the home visits prior to children starting school last September. The senior managers recognise the number of pupils identified as having special educational needs or speak English as an additional language is increasing. The school is meeting this challenge by adjusting the way these groups are supported and their progress monitored.

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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	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	3	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	2	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	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	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	NA
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

Following our visit to inspect your school we would like to tell you how well you are getting on and how well your school is helping you to learn. We enjoyed seeing you at work and at playtimes, and enjoyed talking to you.

The things we think are good about your school are: * Your acting headteacher is good at finding ways to improve your school so that you learn better and enjoy your work more. * All of the grown ups in school look after each of you very well so that you feel safe and happy. You told us that you know they will always help you if you are upset or worried. This makes you enjoy being in school. * You also told us that you like to take on extra responsibilities and to help others. You are pleased that the school listens to you and acts on your ideas. * Your school is friendly and welcoming. You behave well and get on very well with each other.

All of the adults in your school want it to be even better. They are going to check that those of you who find learning difficult or who are learning to speak English do as well as you can. Teachers want to make every lesson as good as the best ones. Your teachers know how to make these improvements and have already started to make changes.