

St Bernadette Catholic VA Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109254
Local Authority	City of Bristol
Inspection number	288328
Inspection dates	10 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Jill Arnold

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	246
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Philip Morgan
Headteacher	Celia Dolan
Date of previous school inspection	15 October 2001
School address	Gladstone Road Hengrove Bristol BS14 9LP
Telephone number	0117 3772373
Fax number	0117 3772379

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors. They evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the quality of teaching and learning, children's achievement, and potentially outstanding features of the school. Evidence was gathered from observations of teaching, and discussions with children, parents, staff and a governor. Reference was made to the school documentation, children's work, and the 53 responses to the parental questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This average sized primary school is located five miles south-east of the city centre and serves families living in neighbouring parishes. Most children are White British. A very small proportion of children from minority ethnic groups are at the early stages of learning English. An average proportion of children have learning difficulties or disabilities. The school has Investors in People, Eco School Quality Mark and Artsmark awards.

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 with some outstanding features. It provides children with good quality care and education, which enables them to feel safe and achieve well. An excellent range of additional activities enhances children's enjoyment of school and their personal development. The school's good reputation locally is promoted by the children's outstanding behaviour.

When children start school their skills are wide-ranging but broadly average, but some aspects of their language development are below expectations. Children make good progress in the Reception class as a result of the outstanding teaching and support they receive. Children's development is checked assiduously and activities are carefully planned to meet their needs and interests. Children reach the levels expected for their age by the end of Reception in most areas of learning, but their communication, language and literacy skills remain limited.

Children make good progress overall from Year 1 to Year 6, as shown by the school's performance in the Year 6 national tests, which has been above average for the last five years. However, there have been variations in the relative achievements of girls and boys in different subjects. The school has worked hard to address these over the last year, focusing on improving boys' writing in particular. Effective procedures for assessing and checking on children's progress and different teaching approaches have had a positive impact on improving the progress of many children, particularly those who were at risk of falling behind. Children at the early stages of learning English and those who have learning difficulties or disabilities achieve well, as a result of the good teaching, support and guidance they receive.

Children's personal development and well-being are good. Their moral and social development is particularly strong, reflecting the school's high expectations in this area. Children are extremely well behaved, polite and respectful. Their spiritual and cultural development is good, reflected in the thoughtful and mature responses of many children in their work and discussions. However, the school recognises that the children's understanding of cultural diversity is less well developed and provides a good range of experiences which are broadening their horizons. Relationships are harmonious in lessons, around school and on the playground. Their various responsibilities and additional sporting, cultural and charitable activities enable them to make a good contribution to school life and the wider community. Their good awareness of the importance of healthy lifestyles is shown in their enthusiasm for physical activity and their knowledge of diet and hygiene. Children's good literacy, numeracy and computer skills, their positive attitudes and strong social skills equip them well for their future lives.

The school provides a good curriculum which is broad and balanced. The range of enrichment and extra-curricular activities is outstanding and they enhance children's personal development as well as their enjoyment of school. The quality of programmes designed to speed up children's progress in specific areas of English and

mathematics is also good. The quality of teaching is good overall, but ranges from satisfactory to outstanding. Where outstanding teaching occurs, children are inspired to work really productively and attain high standards. Characteristic strengths of such teaching include imaginatively planned activities that tap into children's enthusiasm, skilful use of questions to assess, clarify and challenge their thinking, and precise explanations which develop children's learning step by step. When teaching lacks pace and precision, however, the children are less productive and unclear about what is expected of them.

The quality of care, guidance and support children receive is good. The care and attention given to children's well-being is excellent. Effective induction procedures help children who are new to the school to settle quickly and feel included. Children feel safe and secure as a result of robust attention to health, safety and child protection procedures and positive relationships with staff. They mirror these high expectations in their own safe play, their handling of equipment, and their good awareness of how to look after themselves and each other. The strong Catholic ethos underpinning the school's work and a consistent approach by staff to the management of behaviour promote a calm and orderly atmosphere. Provision is well organised for children with additional learning or emotional needs, and includes effective support and close monitoring of progress. Teaching assistants are particularly effective in their work with children who have specific learning needs. There are good links with the Church, neighbouring schools and with external support services to promote children's well-being and achievement. The children receive helpful guidance and feedback on their work, including targets which help them to improve their writing in particular. The recently introduced assessment procedures, whilst helpful in identifying which children require more help with their work, are not always used consistently well to plan the next steps in learning which are shared with the children.

Leadership and management are good. The school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis, with roles clearly understood and all staff playing their part, and there is a well considered plan for its future direction. The school's leaders have a clear view of the school's strengths and areas for development, gained through accurate self-evaluation, which is helping to drive the school forward. The school's strong academic track record and the success of recent initiatives to improve writing demonstrate a good capacity to continue to improve. There is a commitment to developing children as well-rounded individuals as well to promoting their academic achievement, demonstrated by the range and quality of opportunities and experiences provided within and beyond the school day. Governors are well informed and actively involved in evaluating and planning for school improvement. The vast majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire are pleased with what the school provides.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make effective use of existing good and outstanding practice to improve the overall quality of teaching.
- Ensure that the information gathered from assessment is used consistently to guide children's next steps in learning.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate.	School Overall
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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
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.



15 May 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of St Bernadette Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School,
Hengrove, Bristol, BS14 9LP

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to inspect your school recently. We enjoyed visiting your lessons, looking at your work and hearing your views. I am writing to tell you what we found out.

Yours is a good school which helps you to achieve well. There are some excellent things about your school, one of which is your behaviour. We were very impressed with how polite and helpful you are. You enjoy coming to school because everyone gets on well together and you have plenty of interesting things to do in lessons. The youngest children get off to a good start because of the excellent teaching and support they receive. The school also provides an excellent range of trips, visitors and clubs which many of you enjoy and learn from.

The people in charge do a good job to make sure your school is well organised, you are looked after extremely well and you receive a good education. Your teachers are good at making lessons interesting. They keep a close check on how well you are doing and give you extra help if you need it. All the adults at your school work hard to make it a safe, pleasant place to learn. The children who need extra help do well because of the good support they are given.

There are a couple of things we think would help your school to improve further. We have suggested that teachers share ideas and learn from each other to make the teaching in your school even better. We have also asked them to make sure that the advice they give you about your work always helps you to understand exactly what you need to do to improve it. You can help too, by following their advice and asking if you are not sure.

It was a pleasure visiting your school. Thank you for your help during the inspection.

My best wishes for the future.

Jill Arnold
Lead inspector