

St Bede's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112369
Local Authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	289262
Inspection dates	6–7 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Judith Straw

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	232
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr David Carrick
Headteacher	Ms Christina Battle
Date of previous school inspection	1 January 2003
School address	Strathclyde Avenue Carlisle Cumbria CA2 7DS
Telephone number	01228 607550
Fax number	01228 607497

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

St Bede's is an average-sized school situated on the edge of a large council estate in an area of relatively high levels of economic and social deprivation. The proportion of pupils entitled to claim a free school meal is well above average. Most of the pupils are White British but the school has an increasing number of pupils for whom English is an additional language, with some pupils at a very early stage of English language acquisition. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. The attainment of children when they start in Reception is below average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This very welcoming school provides a good quality of education. St Bede's is a happy community, which lives its mission and is underpinned by firm Christian values. Teachers make learning fun by including a variety of activities in lessons. Praise and encouragement are strong features and pupils are taught to think for themselves. Pupils enjoy school and appreciate the efforts made on their behalf. Staff know the pupils well and parents are pleased with the care and academic guidance their children receive. Pupils say they feel safe and know there is always help at hand if it is needed. They understand about how to live healthy lifestyles and how to keep safe. There is a good emphasis on fitness through the curriculum and links with the sporting partnership with the local Catholic high school. The school is very much a community and pupils contribute to the family atmosphere in many ways. For example, older pupils act as playground buddies and monitors and take assemblies. The school hosts several church services for the local parish and everyone is made welcome and included. Strengths in social skills and the pupils' academic skills prepare them well for the future.

The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage are good. Children's achievement when they start in the Nursery is generally below average, although variable year-on-year. They make good progress in all the required areas of learning in the Nursery and Reception classes. The staff's planning is good, and they use assessment information well to prepare new learning activities for the children.

Teaching and learning are good throughout the school, enabling pupils to make good progress in Years 1 to 6. Lessons are enjoyable and interesting and capture the imagination of the pupils. The ongoing tracking of pupils' progress is a strength but day-to-day marking in Years 3 to 6 is not as helpful as it should be in ensuring that pupils know how to improve. As a result of good teaching and the positive attitude of the pupils, achievement is good. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 6 are usually above average, but with a dip in 2006 to broadly average standards. This represented good progress given the starting points of this group of pupils. Pupils were successful in reaching the higher level in English and science but in mathematics some of the more able pupils could have done better.

Leadership and management are good. Clear strengths are the leadership of the headteacher and the strong sense of teamwork and enthusiasm shared by all staff, teaching and non-teaching. All are determined to improve the level of challenge, particularly for the more able pupils, in order to raise standards. Governors are loyal and supportive and know the school well. Financial management is sound. The matters raised in the last inspection have been dealt with thoroughly and the school's self-evaluation shows it has a good capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the marking of pupils' work in Years 3 to 6.
- Ensure that all the more able pupils are properly challenged to reach the highest levels of which they are capable.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good. By the time pupils leave at the end of Year 6, standards are above average.

Children settle well in the Nursery and Reception classes and, from a below-average starting point, they make particularly good progress in their personal and emotional development. Children make good progress, achieve well, and most reach the learning goals set for them because of the high levels of staffing and the extra help they receive.

In Key Stage 1, pupils' performance in the national tests has been broadly average over the last five years, although there was a dip in 2006 when the results were below average. In 2006, pupils performed better in writing than in mathematics and reading. Girls did less well than boys in reading but this was related to the particular group of pupils. Results over time show that boys and girls perform equally well. Pupils currently make good progress in lessons and attain higher standards than Year 2 pupils did in 2006.

In Key Stage 2, standards are usually above average. They were broadly average in 2006. For the past five years, the school's results at the end of Year 6 have consistently exceeded its challenging targets, except that some of the more able pupils could have done better. Inspection evidence shows that all classes make good progress and that pupils currently in Year 6 attain standards that are higher than those shown by the 2006 test results.

Pupils with specific learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because of the support they receive. Pupils for whom English is not their first language, including those at an early stage of language acquisition, are also making good progress because of the increasing levels of support they receive.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is good and their well-being is promoted effectively. The Christian ethos of the school is embraced by the pupils so that their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils behave well and have very positive attitudes to learning. Levels of attendance are average. Pupils say that they enjoy their lessons and the many interesting activities provided by the staff. They learn how to be safe in and around the school, and learn through personal and social education how to protect themselves from harmful situations. The school promotes the pupils' understanding of healthy lifestyles successfully and the pupils enjoy healthy meals and snacks at break.

Through the school council, acting as 'playground buddies' and through involvement in events in the school, parish and locality, pupils make a good contribution to the local and wider community. The recently arrived pupils from other countries, some of whom had no English at all, have been made welcome and soon made many friends. Pupils are well prepared for the transfer to high school and further learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning across the school are good. Classroom teaching is enthusiastic, colourful and successfully engages pupils in their learning. Teachers know the pupils well and plan interesting work. Not all lesson planning reflects the differing levels of attainment. This does not always provide enough challenge, particularly for a small minority of the more able pupils. Pupils are thoroughly engaged in their own learning and are well motivated. The group of pupils for whom English is not their first language have been successfully integrated into school and

are making good progress. Pupils learn well because they work hard and are encouraged to think about what they are doing. The emphasis is on research and investigation, especially in science. Resources are stimulating, and interactive whiteboards are used well to promote enthusiasm for modern technology. The day-to-day marking of work is good, helpful and supportive in Reception to Year 2. In Years 3 to 6 it is not as helpful as it could be in showing pupils how to improve their work. The presentation of pupils' work in Years 3 to 6 could also be improved.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a good curriculum that meets statutory requirements, including those for the Foundation Stage. There is a good concentration on the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Recent developments in resources for information and communication technology have given pupils good opportunities to develop their skills further. For example, two boys in Year 1 created, unaided, a complex mathematical pattern on the classroom's new interactive whiteboard. The staff are seeking new ways to link learning ideas between subjects. For example, a cultural week is planned for later this term to celebrate the widening range of cultural backgrounds of pupils in the school. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities, including sporting and language opportunities linked to the local Catholic high school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good overall, including the Foundation Stage, and the school's care for its pupils is outstanding. The school's excellent care procedures are exemplified by the sensitive and warm acceptance recently of a large group of migrant pupils from a number of different ethnic backgrounds, many of whom had little or no English. The school's swift and determined help, guidance and support for these pupils, supported by the local authority, has been exemplary. All required child protection and safeguarding procedures are in place. Pupils say that they feel very safe here, and that 'bullying is not a problem'. Guidance and support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are good, usually helping these pupils to make good progress towards their learning targets. Assessment and the overall tracking of pupils' progress are good. However, short-term assessment of pupils' work is not sufficiently thorough in Years 3 to 6.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher is an effective leader who manages a school where everyone feels valued. All the staff work closely together as a team, sharing information and good practice. Senior leaders regularly and thoroughly analyse how well the school is performing. Other members of staff are also involved in monitoring the work in their subject areas. Management decisions are driven by the needs of the pupils, and a great deal of creative thinking goes into making the best use of the school's resources. Pupils have equal access to the curriculum although a small minority of able pupils could be challenged more effectively. The school's strong Christian ethos makes for good relationships, happy pupils and a pleasant learning environment. Governance is good. Governors carry out their responsibilities effectively and are very supportive of the school. For example, the chair of governors acted as

caretaker for a week last term when the school caretaker fell ill. Governors strike a good balance between supporting the school and encouraging it to do even better.

Annex A

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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	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
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
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 the 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

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.

Annex A**Leadership and management**

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

8 June 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Bede's Catholic Primary School, Carlisle, CA2 7DS

Thank you for making us feel so welcome when we visited you in school this week. We enjoyed meeting so many of you and hearing about the many things you like about school. We were very impressed with your singing in the hymn practice and the happy, smiling faces we saw everywhere.

These are the things that we thought were good in your school.

- The way you all look after each other and care for each other.
- The way in which you have welcomed pupils from other countries into school.
- The interesting lessons planned by the teachers, which you obviously enjoy.
- The way in which the headteacher and all the teachers work so well together, planning the best ways to help you.
- The extra activities; such as, 'Spanish Week', the residential visits and the many people who come into school to talk about their jobs.
- The fact that you all feel safe and secure in school and can talk to many different adults if you have any problems.

To make your school even better we have asked the teachers to give you more information when they mark your work. We think that some of you in Years 3 to 6 could take more care in presenting your work so that it is neater and easier to read. Finally, we think that some of you could manage to do even more exciting and challenging work.

We wish you good luck in the future and enjoyed meeting you.

Yours sincerely

Judith Straw and Eric Jackson

Inspectors