

# St Bernadette's Roman Catholic Primary School, Whitefield

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	105347
<b>Local Authority</b>	Bury
<b>Inspection number</b>	308838
<b>Inspection date</b>	14 May 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Peter Jones

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5-11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	219
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs M Sawley
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr D Burns
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	26 April 2004
<b>School address</b>	Abingdon Avenue Whitefield Manchester Lancashire M45 8PT
<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 7666098
<b>Fax number</b>	0161 7966436

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: achievement and standards; the curriculum; care, guidance and support; some aspects of teaching and learning; and the Foundation Stage. Evidence was gathered from lesson observations, parents' questionnaires, scrutiny of pupils' work and of assessment data and other documents. In addition, discussions were held with pupils, governors and key staff. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation form, were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

This average sized primary school is situated in a residential area and takes pupils from varied social and economic backgrounds. The vast majority of pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is lower than in most schools. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The school has gained the Investors in People award and also has Healthy Schools status. It also holds the Basic Skills Quality Mark, the National Association of Advisers for Computers in Education (NAACE) Kitemark and the Activemark.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school. Its pupils consistently achieve exceptionally high standards and develop into well rounded, confident and articulate individuals. The dedicated headteacher provides outstanding leadership. He works with skill and imagination to maintain and improve excellent achievement by pupils and also to extend the exceptionally rich educational experience the school provides for all pupils. He is very well supported by a highly effective senior leadership team, skilled and enthusiastic staff and a resourceful, far-sighted governing body. As a result, the school has made an outstanding improvement since the last inspection in all areas. The school's buildings and resources have been extended and updated and these have enhanced the quality and effectiveness of pupils' learning. The school monitors its work in depth and its self-evaluation is generally accurate. However, it underestimates the quality of pupils' achievement and of its teaching and learning, and also the quality and standards in the Foundation Stage. These areas merit outstanding judgements rather than the good judgements the school has given itself. Given its sustained exceptional performance, the school has outstanding capacity for further improvement. The school's leadership has markedly improved the way it gathers and analyses data about pupils' performance. Even so, it has not sufficiently refined its systems to provide a clear and easily accessible overview of how pupils progress as they move through the school.

Pupils' achievement is outstanding. Children enter the Foundation Stage (Reception) with skills that are broadly in line with those expected for their age. They make an excellent start to their learning and by the time they reach Year 1 their standards in all areas of learning are well above expectations. By the end of Year 6, pupils have made excellent progress and consistently reach exceptionally high standards in English, mathematics and science. This exemplifies the excellent value for money the school provides. Pupils also reach very high standards in information and communication technology (ICT) and in French. This is the result of high quality teaching throughout the school. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are extremely well supported by highly effective teaching assistants and they make progress in line with their classmates as a result.

Pupils thoroughly enjoy their time in school. 'It is fantastic here. I love it,' was a view endorsed by many pupils. Attendance is above the national average and pupils are extremely keen to participate in lessons and the wide range of activities the school provides for them. Their behaviour is exemplary and they are very polite and show genuine warmth towards each other and to visitors. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly supportive of the school's work. 'The school makes extra effort to get the whole family involved in school life,' was a typical comment. Pupils say they feel safe and that things are quickly remedied on the rare occasions that pupils fall out. Pupils have exceptional opportunities to take exercise and develop awareness of the need to lead a healthy lifestyle. There is an expectation that pupils will take responsibility and serve the school and wider community from an early age. They respond to this enthusiastically and have many roles, including acting as classroom monitors and play leaders. The school council is given a real say in running the school and recently managed the budget to improve playground equipment. There is a strong tradition of fundraising and the lessons and visits pupils undertake give them a very good understanding and knowledge of other faiths and cultures. Opportunities to take part in dance and drama and to learn about a wide spectrum of artistic mediums enhance pupils' creative development. The range of academic and interpersonal skills pupils acquire at St Bernadette's prepares them extremely well for their future learning and life.

Outstanding teaching has a consistently strong impact on pupils' learning throughout the school. All staff have high expectations of work and behaviour, and lessons are carefully planned to meet the needs of all pupils. The excellent relationships between pupils and adults are a highly significant factor in pupils' strong achievement. Displays feature and celebrate pupils' work, adding further to their self-esteem and motivation. The use of computers and electronic whiteboards adds sparkle to lessons. The skilful use of opportunities for speaking and listening produces pupils who can discuss and debate confidently. The school's curriculum is exceptionally rich and has a major influence on pupils' achievement and personal development. Subjects are linked to make lessons more exciting and interesting and this keeps pupils engaged in their learning. Pupils take part in a huge range of stimulating activities as they move through school. The school promotes excellence in areas such as ICT, French and music and has forged very productive links with the local high school to broaden further the skills and confidence of its pupils.

Staff place the highest priority on pupils' care and well-being. They know their pupils very well and a strong family atmosphere permeates the school. The conscientious caretaker and his loyal staff take pride in keeping the school impeccably clean and well maintained. Pupils' needs are expertly supported with great sensitivity and effectiveness. The work of the Rainbow project to help bereaved and troubled pupils is a typical example of the school's commitment to the pastoral care of all. Parents greatly appreciate the before- and after-school clubs provided for their children. The school's safeguarding procedures meet current requirements. The school's academic guidance is excellent. Teachers set clear, challenging and attainable targets for improvement and provide pupils with the advice they need to take the next steps in their learning. This contributes significantly to pupils' outstanding achievement.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 1**

From entry to the Reception class, children make rapid progress in all areas. This is because the school's induction arrangements are highly effective and children settle quickly and happily into school routines. Also, the highly skilled staff are extremely successful in improving children's personal, social and emotional development. The confidence and security children subsequently gain enables them to access with success all areas of a very stimulating and varied curriculum. Resources are first class and are used to maximum effect to meet the needs of all individuals. Children thrive as a result and develop excellent relationships with adults and their classmates. Most have become independent and confident in learning before they enter Year 1. Over the year, language and communication skills show a marked improvement and children are able to answer questions and sustain conversations with confidence. Many are able to read fluently and write simple sentences. The strong emphasis on structured play both indoors and outdoors means children have very good opportunities to improve their physical development and coordination skills. This excellent beginning underpins pupils' outstanding achievement and personal development as they progress through the school.

Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are excellent. Staff work closely to plan the exciting activities carefully matched to each child's individual needs. Children's progress is meticulously recorded and there is highly effective liaison with staff in Key Stage 1.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Refine the school's data analysis systems to provide clearer information on the progress pupils make as they move through the school.

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## 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?	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

### Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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



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

I am writing to thank you for being friendly and helpful when I visited your school recently. I enjoyed my visit very much. I would like to share with you what I found out about your school.

Everyone I spoke to told me how proud they are to attend St Bernadette's and all about the exciting lessons and enjoyable activities your school provides. I agree that you go to an outstanding school. Your attendance and punctuality are most impressive. Your behaviour is excellent at all times, and you are very enthusiastic and hard working in your lessons. The staff in school also work very hard to make sure you learn as much as possible and also to make your lessons interesting and fun. You make excellent progress and reach high standards as a result. I was very pleased to find so many of you taking responsibility and helping others as school councillors, play leaders and monitors. All this unselfish work helps everyone to get along brilliantly and has also given you better equipment in your playground. You appreciate the many opportunities to take part in clubs and after-school activities, and love the residential visits to the Lake District and York. Your school looks after you very well and makes sure you know how to improve your work.

Your school is very clear about what it must do to continue to be outstanding. I have suggested something that will help this to happen. I would like your school to have a clearer picture of how well you are making progress in your work. You can help by always trying your best and thinking about how you can improve even more. You are a great team at St Bernadette's. Keep working together for success and happiness.