

St Bede's Catholic Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111371
Local Authority	Halton
Inspection number	310583
Inspection dates	12–13 September 2007
Reporting inspector	David Halford

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	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	266
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs P Ruth
Headteacher	Mrs A Paget
Date of previous school inspection	31 March 2003
School address	Appleton Village Widnes Cheshire WA8 6EL
Telephone number	0151 4243386
Fax number	0151 4951886

Age group	7–11
Inspection dates	12–13 September 2007
Inspection number	310583

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This larger than average Catholic Junior School serves an area of mixed housing in Widnes. The school shares a site with a neighbouring infant school which is under separate leadership. The number of pupils eligible for a free school meal is broadly average. The number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is well below average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average. The school has received a number of awards including Investors in People, NAACEmark, ICT Mark, the Healthy Schools Award, Artsmark, Activemark Gold and Basic Skills Quality Mark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Clear vision, excellent evaluation of its current position and detailed action to sustain high standards combine to make this an outstanding school. It is led by an inspirational headteacher who, with the help of all her senior leaders and staff, combines rigorous checks on provision with much encouragement and support so that staff know exactly what is expected of them. All leaders and managers have very high expectations of what the pupils should achieve. They also have the determination and skill to ensure that pupils enjoy all aspects of school life. Parents are generous in their praise, their comments summed up by, 'St Bede's is a wonderful school: all children are treated equally and it has a real sense of community.. The school ensures that our children's experiences really do give them a breadth of knowledge that adds another dimension to lives'.

The school has consistently maintained above average standards since the last inspection and in recent years standards have risen. Early indications of pupils' standards in 2007 show that they are well above average. This represents outstanding achievement over time. The Pupils' personal development is excellent and promoted extremely well by high quality care, guidance and support and a rich and diverse curriculum. Relationships are particularly strong at all levels. Pupils play enthusiastically, behave sensibly and safely and thoroughly enjoy all the exciting activities that the school offers them.

The school has extremely detailed and thorough arrangements to check staff performance. This ensures that teaching and learning is of the highest quality and is central to the exceptional progress made by pupils. Detailed checking of pupils' progress throughout the school ensures that those likely to fall behind, or those progressing rapidly, are identified quickly and swift, appropriate action is taken. The school's self-evaluation systems form an integral part of its everyday practice. They are regularly reviewed and adapted to ensure that they are being used to optimum effect in the pupils' best interests. Since the last inspection, under the clarity and vision of the headteacher, a well established leadership team has grasped every opportunity to ensure that the school maintains its outstanding provision. The governors are capable, knowledgeable and challenging. The school has excellent capacity to sustain its current position and provides excellent value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Because of its excellent self-evaluation the school is already taking effective action to sustain high standards and ensure that teaching and learning are of high quality throughout the school. It has no significant areas for improvement that are not already included in its current development plan.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Pupils enter the school with above average standards in reading and mathematics and average standards in writing. Once established, they achieve very well. By the end of Year 6, overall standards are consistently above average and have been sustained at this level since the last inspection. Standards from 2005 to the present show an improving trend and the early indications of pupils' test results at the end of 2007 show standards that are well above average, particularly in mathematics and science. This represents outstanding achievement over time. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve outstandingly well because of the high quality

support available to them and the careful matching of tasks to their levels of ability. Pupils' individual progress is carefully monitored and challenging targets are set for them, which they achieve well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being is outstanding overall. There are particular strengths in pupils' enjoyment of learning and in the extensive range of opportunities they have in making a contribution to the school community. The school council is very active in this. They are very proud of their success in promoting the improvement to their toilets and in their charitable work, which is well supported. They know that their views and actions are taken into account and can influence the school's provision. They are learning skills which will serve them well in adult life. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The denominational foundation of the school is central to all its work. Pupils know right from wrong and respect each other particularly well. Their behaviour is of a very high standard. Their attitudes and relationships are excellent and contribute very strongly to the outstanding progress that they make. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves safe and healthy and they clearly love being in school. Their attendance is good.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teaching and learning is outstanding and contribute hugely to the standards pupils achieve. Teachers and support staff are confident and very thorough in their work. Lessons are planned meticulously, based upon a thorough assessment of what pupils have already achieved and a detailed understanding of the needs of individuals. Perceptive questioning enables pupils to think logically, gain confidence and extend their speaking and listening skills. Pupils' behaviour is managed very effectively. Able and well informed teaching assistants support lessons very well, often for pupils who find learning difficult. Pupils respond very well to all the adults with whom they come into contact. The strong emphasis placed on the creative arts and active learning promotes very well pupils' enthusiasm and enables them to make effective links between their work in different subjects. They use information and communication technology (ICT) skilfully and produce written work of very high quality. Teachers work hard to challenge pupils of all abilities. Pupils know this and rise to the challenge extremely well.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding and meets the needs of all the pupils, including those who are vulnerable and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There is a particularly wide range of activities undertaken and pupils use their very good basic skills in many contexts. Every opportunity is taken to ensure that pupils make effective links between subjects and there is a strong focus on the development of their computer skills. Work of the highest quality was seen at the start of the school year, particularly in mathematics and music. An analysis of past work shows outstanding examples of pupils' work in writing and art. The curriculum is supplemented by a very wide range of visits and visitors. Residential visits are undertaken by each year group and include visits to European destinations, which help to promote pupils'

early development of other languages. Pupils support these additional activities enthusiastically. Other cultures are celebrated in focused days, for example, Islamic and Swedish Days. The school council recalled these activities well and spoke of them excitedly.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school provides a very caring and extremely friendly environment. Staff have a close knowledge of the pupils and their families. Pupils are always encouraged to do their best. Their confidence and self-esteem is enhanced as a result of the praise they receive for high quality work. Detailed procedures to safeguard pupils and ensure their health, safety and well-being are in place. Pupils say that their teachers are caring and assist in solving problems should they arise. A very effective programme to promote physical, social and health education (PSHE) contributes extremely well to their many well developed personal skills. Pupils settle readily into their new classes at the start of the new term as a result of a very effective induction process. These initiatives contribute very positively to the pupils' personal feelings of safety and security while in school. Academic guidance is excellent and is central to the pupils' all-round achievement. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, together with those at risk of slipping behind, are identified readily and supported very effectively through a wide range of effective interventions.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Outstanding leadership and management are integral to the school's sustained success. The headteacher's inspirational leadership has successfully created and maintained a climate in which everyone constantly strives to improve pupils' academic and social development. All staff share in this resolve. Senior and middle managers have an excellent knowledge of the academic and personal needs of each pupil. Individual pupils' progress is tracked with precision, helping to clearly identify their next steps in learning. Staff at all levels know what is expected of them and are confident in their actions. Staff are encouraged, through high quality professional development, to use their expertise confidently, not only for the benefit of pupils in their own school but also for others in the locality. Governance of the school is excellent. Governors are strong supporters of the school but are equally confident in questioning procedures and initiatives. They are currently significantly involved in the development of the school grounds. They were described in the last report as 'true critical friends' and have maintained this high level of involvement in the work of the school.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

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

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?	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Inspection of St Bede's Catholic Junior School, Widnes, WA8 6EL.

Mr Madeley, Mr Wainwright and I all really enjoyed our recent visit to your school.

Thank you very much for your very warm welcome and for looking after us so well. You were very helpful in lessons when we asked you to explain what you were doing and also very friendly around school. Particular thanks should go to members of last year's school council who helped us to understand why it is that you enjoy your school so much.

We do not think you will be surprised to hear that we think St Bede's Junior is an excellent school and you all seem to enjoy yourselves so very much. We were impressed with your confidence and genuine care for others. You behave extremely well, are keen to take on responsibilities and are very good at including everyone. We think that you are very lucky that your teachers organise so many exciting things for you to do. We really enjoyed the music lesson with those marvellous drums. We all heard your performance, even though I was the only one observing it!

Your headteacher and other teachers know how good your school is and what they need to do next to keep it working so well for you. They know that your standards in reading, writing and mathematics are good and have been improving recently. The teachers help you to link your work together and produce beautiful displays which have all sorts of interesting work in them. We will remember the artwork and writing you did on the story Charlotte's Web and the exciting science Year 6 did with cabbage. We have every confidence that your teachers will continue to make your school keep up the excellent work it is doing.

With our very best wishes for the future - we do hope that you continue to enjoy learning as much as you do at the moment.