

St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116391
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	312289
Inspection dates	26–27 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Barnard Payne

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	319
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr G Dorey
Headteacher	Mrs J Hooper
Date of previous school inspection	17 May 2004
School address	Tile Barn Close Cove Farnborough GU14 8LS
Telephone number	01252 548123
Fax number	01252 511816

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

St Bernadette's is a larger than average primary school. The number of pupils from minority ethnic groups is much higher than average. Many of these have a first language other than English and a very small group are at an early stage of acquiring English. There is a significant minority from Nepalese backgrounds. Fewer than average pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Most of those with learning difficulties have problems with acquiring literacy skills. Additionally, there is a small group identified by the school as having social and emotional needs. The school serves a large, socially mixed area. Few pupils are eligible for free school meals. The school has the Healthy Schools award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

St Bernadette's provides a satisfactory quality of education. Aspects of its work are good. Parents and pupils show strong support for the school and its caring, inclusive Christian ethos. As one parent comments, 'St Bernadette's is a community which is committed to educating the whole child'.

The school has stabilised its staffing over the past year but the new teaching team has not had time to have a full impact on standards. Lessons are well managed and motivate the pupils. There is a growing consistency of approach to lesson planning but not all plans clearly identify what each ability group is expected to learn.

Children make a good start in Reception. In Key Stage 1, the pupils make satisfactory progress and do well in writing. They continue to do well in English in Key Stage 2 and in the 2007 tests for Year 6, pupils reached well above average standards. In mathematics and science standards are not as high and were average in national tests last year. The school has made it a priority to raise standards in mathematics and science. As a result, progress is improving and pupils are on track to reach their targets this year.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and reflects the school's strong Catholic ethos. Pupils enjoy school, show considerate behaviour and positive attitudes and have good attendance. They feel safe and adopt healthy lifestyles. Pupils from different backgrounds work well together. They make good overall progress in developing the key skills and personal qualities to enable them to contribute effectively to the community, to transfer to their next school and to their future working lives. The school provides a good range of learning opportunities, including French lessons and a variety of extracurricular activities. The school cares well for its pupils. One parent commented, 'Teachers are incredibly kind and supportive'.

The school has made satisfactory progress since the previous inspection. It has maintained standards and improved its use of assessment data and provision for information and communication technology (ICT). The school has not been able to tackle other issues as rapidly as it wished because of the frequent changes in staffing. The creation of phase and subject teams to build leadership capacity is relatively new and it is too early to judge the effectiveness of recent initiatives, but there is now greater stability and consistency in quality. The school has a satisfactory capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children arrive from a range of settings and quickly settle under the good care and guidance of the staff. Parents are pleased with the way that they and their children feel welcomed. Standards on entry are at the expected level for young children. Children make a good start to school in the Foundation Stage. Effective leadership has ensured that children benefit from good teaching and a broad curriculum. Assessments of children's learning are accurate and help teachers plan effectively for the needs of each child. There is a good balance between adult-led activities and those that allow children to choose for themselves. Staff give children's personal development a high priority and, as a result, children know the routines and build positive relationships.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' progress in mathematics and science in Key Stage 2.
- Ensure lesson plans set out clearly what each ability group is expected to learn.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Many changes in teaching staff in the recent past have led to inconsistent achievement from year to year. Tests in 2007, at the end of Key Stage 1, show that pupils made good progress in writing, and reached well above average standards. They made satisfactory progress in reading and mathematics, reaching levels similar to the national average. In Key Stage 2, pupils made good progress in English in 2007, reaching well above average standards and improving on the average attainment of the previous year. Standards in both mathematics and science also improved on 2006 results, which were below average. The pupils made less progress than expected in mathematics and science in the last two years. However, progress is now satisfactory because the new teaching team is using strategies that focus support more effectively. Pupils whose first language is not English make satisfactory progress. Like their peers, they make better progress in English than in mathematics. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils can think of nothing they would change about their school. They try hard and are keen to succeed. For example, in a mathematics lesson, pupils were so interested and involved that they continued to bombard their teacher with questions well into the lunch hour. They get on well with one another and find the school a safe place where they can be certain to find someone to help them. Parents are supportive of the school's work to help their children. One said, 'When I collect my children, they have smiles on their faces. They learn and are happy.' Pupils learn to develop respect for themselves and others. They have good opportunities to pray for one another and to reflect on their own beliefs and ideas. They enjoy many opportunities to learn about different cultures and about one another's cultural backgrounds. Pupils show a good understanding of the importance of healthy lifestyles and staying safe, especially through the work of the Healthy School Council. They enjoy taking responsibility and are proud of their input into school life. Pupils gain confidence and new skills through involvement in a wide range of extra-curricular activities.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Test results show that teaching has been inconsistent in the past and pupils have made uneven progress. Teachers now have a consistent focus on improving standards. There are now strengths in teaching, but these are not yet reflected fully in test results. Occasionally, pupils have to spend too much time listening and this restricts their opportunities to ask questions and take

an active role. Teachers manage activities effectively. Although they carry out accurate assessments, in some lessons this does not lead to plans that set out clearly what all groups of pupils are expected to learn. Teachers often involve pupils in assessing their own progress and this is leading to pupils developing the ability to reflect on what they have learned and what they find difficult. Results show that teachers and teaching assistants provide good support in helping pupils acquire literacy skills, which is a major focus for pupils with learning difficulties.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy the range of activities provided. The school has improved its provision for ICT and this is now good. The school also makes good provision for literacy, as shown by the improvements in progress by pupils in all ability groups. Provision for numeracy is satisfactory, although the impact of improvements is not yet evident in test results. The programme of music, French and drama extends the range of skills pupils learn. A weekly French lesson is enabling pupils in Years 1 and 2 to become both competent and confident in speaking a new language. The establishment of a nurture group programme is successfully helping more vulnerable pupils in their academic and personal development. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities to which pupils respond well.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Procedures for safeguarding children are securely in place. Effective induction procedures ensure that pupils settle quickly when joining the school. There are also effective systems to enable pupils to transfer smoothly from one class to another. The school makes good use of outside agencies to support pupils and their families. Pupils who are new to English receive good support and establish effective relationships with staff. Teachers track pupils' progress and are making increasingly effective use of the information to plan work. The school has identified this as a development priority, particularly to ensure that pupils have challenging targets. The school gives pupils individual targets in English and mathematics. In mathematics, these have not yet had an impact on test results, although the school has accurately identified individuals and groups for extra support and guidance.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher has led the school well through a difficult period of staffing instability and ensured that pupils sustain satisfactory standards. She has managed staff changes well and developed a management structure that is successfully building the staff's leadership capabilities. The school has an accurate view of its own performance. This has led to its identification of the most important aspects for improvement. It has focused effectively on improving teaching and regular monitoring has led to greater consistency so that standards continue to rise. It is too early to measure the success of new strategies. However, there are early signs that these are having a positive impact on pupils' progress. Governors give the school staunch support and act as critical friends, visiting the school regularly and linking up with staff teams.

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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?	3
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?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

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

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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?	3
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?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

07 April 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School, Farnborough, GU14 8LS

Thank you for helping us during the inspection at your school. We enjoyed seeing your work in lessons and talking to you about life at St Bernadette's. We know that you enjoy being there and feel well looked after. We were impressed with your considerate behaviour and with how positive you are about what the school has to offer.

The school is satisfactory but we agree with you that there are some things about the school that are good. St Bernadette's helps you develop the knowledge and skills that will help you do well at your next school and later on in your working lives. You do particularly well in English, which is a very important subject for future success. The teachers have already begun to help you make better progress in mathematics and science. We have asked them to carry on with this work so that standards rise to the same level as those in English. Wherever possible we would like the teachers to make it clear in their plans what you are expected to learn in each lesson. We also feel that, in some lessons, the targets you are set should be clearer. This will ensure that all of you find the work challenging and will set your sights high.

You can help your teachers by making sure you know what your next steps in mathematics and science are in order to take your work to a higher level.

Barnard Payne

Lead Inspector