

St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118041
Local Authority	North Lincolnshire
Inspection number	312791
Inspection dates	10–11 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Joe Clark

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	293
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Christina Kennedy
Headteacher	Mr Paul McNicholas
Date of previous school inspection	1 February 2004
School address	Anne's Crescent Ashby Scunthorpe DN16 2LW
Telephone number	01724 842382
Fax number	01724 281089

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	10–11 January 2008
Inspection number	312791

© Crown copyright 2008

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

St Bernadette's is a larger than average school situated in a mixed social area but with some significant pockets of deprivation. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is average. The percentage of pupils who do not speak English as their first language is increasing but remains well below the national average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. Until recently, the school had a fairly stable population but mobility is now higher than that normally seen.

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. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent, reflecting a strong Catholic ethos and values. Relationships are very positive and provide pupils with valuable support and encouragement. Consequently, they greatly enjoy coming to school where their attitudes and behaviour are good, and in lessons are usually outstanding. Attendance is above average. Pupils make a good contribution to the life of the school and local community, particularly the Parish community. They are keenly aware of the benefits of keeping safe and the importance of exercise and a healthy diet. The pastoral care and support of pupils is outstanding. Pupils are known well and respected as individuals. The school works purposefully and successfully to create an ethos which personifies the school prayer: 'that as many hands build a house so many hearts make a school'. Great care is taken to ensure pupils' welfare and systems for ensuring pupils' safety meet all requirements.

In their academic work, pupils achieve high standards and make good progress at both key stages. Achievement at the end of Key Stage 2 is typically good and standards are generally significantly above average. In 2007, the results of the national tests were below average at the end of Key Stage 2 in English and mathematics. The causes of this dip have been thoroughly examined and vigorously tackled; pupils are currently making good progress. The current Year 6 pupils are on target to achieve their challenging targets, thereby restoring the above average test results gained prior to 2007. The high standards reached in English, mathematics and science are good preparation for pupil's future education. Although higher attaining pupils are making good progress, they could achieve even better because expectations for them are often not high enough. The school is mindful in ensuring that pupils who do not speak English when they join the school receive appropriate support and make progress in their learning.

Pupils achieve well because teaching and learning are good, the curriculum is well planned to meet pupils' needs and pupils bring positive and cooperative attitudes to their work. Teaching has greatly improved since the previous inspection. The curriculum is enhanced by an innovative and exciting link with a school in China, for example, a group of older pupils are learning Mandarin and will visit China in the summer.

The success of the school owes much to its strong leadership and management. The headteacher gives clear direction. The evaluations of the school's performance made by the staff, supported by a good governing body, are accurate. The systems for tracking the progress of pupils however, whilst satisfactory, are not rigorous enough in identifying pupils who might be underachieving.

The school has improved since the last inspection and has a good capacity to continue to do so in future. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive. One comment was typical of many, 'St Bernadette's is a lovely, welcoming school with approachable staff. All the teachers and especially the headteacher will always make time to speak to parents if they have any concerns'.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Since the previous inspection provision in the Foundation Stage has improved considerably and is now good overall. Children are very well cared for. Sensitive induction arrangements help to establish a strong partnership with parents and help children to settle quickly, encouraging them to feel confident and safe. Good teaching and learning underpins the good progress children make, though the most able are not always offered sufficient challenge.

Assessments show that children's knowledge and skills on entry are broadly typical for their age. Good use of the space and resources both inside and outside harnesses the children's natural curiosity through a wide variety of stimulating activities. These are carefully assessed to plan the next steps for learning. Detailed progress folders assist staff in easing children's move into Year 1. Leadership and management are good. Teaching assistants are not always used effectively to support children's learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise achievement further by increasing expectations for higher attaining pupils.
- Develop a more rigorous and effective tracking system to identify and challenge underachievement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are above average and achievement is good in both key stages. Pupils enter the school in Year 1 with standards that generally meet expectations for their age; although this varies from year to year and can be below expectations. They make good progress in Key Stage 1 and standards are above average. The results of the 2007 national tests at the end of Key Stage 1 were broadly average, but current standards are higher.

Until 2007, standards at the end of Year 6 were always above or well above average, an indication that pupils had achieved well or very well. The 2007 results dipped sharply to below average in English and mathematics and well below in science because the proportion of higher attaining pupils reaching the higher levels was less than expected. Results were adversely affected by the inward mobility of pupils joining the school part way through Key Stage 2, the influx of pupils with poor English speaking skills and timetabling innovations that did not work. This is not the situation this year: standards are higher and the pupils are making good progress.

Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress against the targets set out in their individual education plans. Pupils who are at an early stage of learning English make satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The pupils' personal development and well-being is good with outstanding levels of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. These outcomes reflect the school's strong Christian commitment to personal values. Pupils greatly enjoy coming to school and attendance is above average. They get on very well together make friends easily and look out for each other, particularly when acting as playground play leaders. Newcomers have been accepted to the school and pupils have gone out of their way to make them feel welcome and part of the school community. Pupils set a good example through their good attitudes to learning. Standards of behaviour are generally high, though pupils said there were occasional instances of challenging behaviour. The school has a Healthy Schools award and pupils are conscious about healthy lifestyles: there is a good turn out each morning for 'wake up and shake up' activities. Pupils know the important factors in ensuring they stay safe. They enjoy taking on responsibility, for example, as school council members. They make a good contribution to the local community, especially the parish community, for example, through the parish barbeque and family bingo

nights. Pupils' excellent social skills and above average basic skills prepare them well for the next stage of their learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good overall despite some being satisfactory. The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the previous inspection. Good planning ensures that pupils' work is generally well matched to the ability range within the class. Most lessons are well structured and pupils know from the outset what it is they are expected to learn. Where teaching is satisfactory rather than good, expectations of what pupils can achieve, particularly higher attaining pupils are too low. Pupils' work is regularly marked with encouraging comments. There are good examples of assessment, for example, involving pupils in assessing their own work, but good practice is not consistent in all classes. Pupils are not all clear as to what national curriculum level they are working at and what they need to do to improve their work and move up a level. Teaching assistants are actively involved in lesson planning and helping pupils learn.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good curriculum meets requirements. The programme for religious education and personal and social development is very strong and does much to benefit pupils' learning. Opportunities to develop basic literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum are well established. The 'big write' initiative to provide more frequent opportunities for extended writing is helping to raise standards. Good provision exists for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and other pupils requiring extra help. Good links with a local college and football club contributes to the progress of gifted and talented pupils. The overall provision for the higher attaining pupils however, is not refined enough. Pupils benefit from a good range of extra-curricular activities, educational trips, sporting challenges and opportunities for involvement in community events. These activities contribute immensely to pupils' enjoyment and achievement. Some older pupils, for example, learn Mandarin as a result of the link with a school in China.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. The school is very caring and there are outstanding levels of pastoral support for pupils. Relationships are excellent and are a key factor in enabling pupils to enjoy school and like learning. Teachers and other adults know their pupils well. Great care is taken to ensure their safety and welfare, for example, through rigorous safeguarding systems and risk assessment procedures. Good links with other agencies ensure children receive appropriate support when needed, for example, in the early stages of learning English. Academic guidance is satisfactory. Although assessment and tracking procedures are generally effective, the tracking is not sharp enough to identify all pupils who might underachieve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school is well led and managed and gives good value for money. The headteacher provides astute and caring leadership, appropriately focussed on maintaining and improving personal and academic standards. He is well supported by an effective deputy headteacher, senior management team and subject coordinators. The recent dip in test results for Year 6, resulted in a thorough whole-school review and effective action was taken immediately. These actions to rectify weaknesses demonstrate the school's determination to do as well as it can. Targets at the end of Year 6 are challenging and generally met. The school knows itself well. Systems for monitoring the work of the school are effective but the systems for tracking pupils' progress lack rigour. They rely too heavily on a narrow range of test results. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection in teaching and learning and in the effectiveness of the Foundation Stage. Consequently there is good capacity to improve further. Governance is good. Governors have good curriculum and classroom links and provide effective support and challenge for 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?	2
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	2

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	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
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	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

14 January 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School, North Lincolnshire, DN16 2LW

Thank you so much for your warm welcome when I visited your school to see how well you are learning. My team and I really appreciated the help you gave us and the interesting things you told us about your school. We enjoyed your assembly and were very impressed, not only by the quality of your singing, but by your enthusiasm and willingness to join in.

Yours is a good school. The teachers and other adults take excellent care of you. Helped by good teaching, and your own excellent attitudes, you learn well and make good progress. Your behaviour is good and your attendance is better than in most schools.

Your national test results at the end of Year 6 are usually among the best in the country. In 2007, for various reasons, results dipped to below average. We are pleased to see that the standards we saw have been restored to the high levels seen in previous years. Those of you with the most ability however could do even better; more of you could attain the higher grades of Level 5 by the end of Year 6.

The school is well led by your headteacher, the school governors and the other teachers. They know you very well. They have ensured you leave St Bernadette's with outstanding personal qualities. They track your academic progress as you move through the school in ways that are satisfactory but which could be better.

With your continued hard work we know you will do well and achieve great success when you move on to the next stage of your education. Thank you once again for being so friendly and helpful and good luck for the future!

Yours faithfully

Joe Clark

Lead inspector